

Poster presentation

Effects of discontinuation of long-term anticholinergic treatment in elderly schizophrenia patients

T Drimer*¹, B Shahal² and Y Barak¹

Address: ¹Abarbanel Mental Health Center, Bat-Yam, Israel and ²Rambam Hospital, Haifa, Israel. Affiliated with the Sackler Faculty of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University, Israel

* Corresponding author

from International Society on Brain and Behaviour: 1st International Congress on Brain and Behaviour Hyatt Regency Hotel, Thessaloniki, Greece, 20–23 November, 2003

Published: 23 December 2003

Received: 1 November 2003

Annals of General Hospital Psychiatry 2003, **2**(Suppl 1):S152

This article is available from: <http://www.general-hospital-psychiatry.com/content/2/S1/S152>

Background

The use of anticholinergic medications (ACM) in psychiatry is mainly for the treatment of D₂ blocking agents side-effects. The group most likely to be exposed to ACM are the elderly. However, the ACM themselves are not without adverse effects and in the elderly cognitive and memory impairments have been emphasized. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of discontinuation of ACM on cognitive functions in a group of elderly chronic schizophrenia patients.

Material and Methods

Twenty-seven elderly patients (age 60 years or older) diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia (DSM-IV) and receiving ACM in addition to antipsychotic treatment were enrolled. Before and after ACM was discontinued the Alzheimer's disease Assessment Scale – Cognitive subscale (ADAS-Cog) was administered.

Results

Twenty-one patients completed the study. All were receiving biperiden, 2–6 mg daily prior to the study. Significant improvement in the ADAS-Cog total score was demonstrated ($p < 0.03$) as well as in the ideational praxia and orientation subscales. Improvement was correlated with the dose of biperiden administered. No adverse events or emergent extra-pyramidal symptoms were noted.

Discussion

Discontinuation of ACM may be warranted in chronic long-stay schizophrenia patients as it may improve cognitive functioning with no adverse effects