Olanzapine for schizophrenia: a Cochrane systematic review

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Background
Novel antipsychotics may have addressed the limitations of traditional neuroleptics. They are said to have better efficacy and favourable side effect profiles.

Olanzapine is reported to be an effective antipsychotic without producing the disabling extrapyramidal side effects associated with typical drugs.

Objectives
To systematically review the effects of olanzapine for people with schizophrenia.

Methods

Searching

Search term
(zyprexa or olanzapine)

Criteria
Study methodology - randomised trials
Participants - people with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or non-affective ‘serious/chronic mental illness’/‘psychotic illness’
Interventions - olanzapine versus placebo or any antipsychotic drug

Trial selection and data analysis
Studies were independently inspected and quality assessed.

Relevant data were extracted and assimilated within RevMan Software.

Intention-to-treat analyses were undertaken for dichotomous data and relative risk (RR) and numbers needed to treat/harm (NNT/H) calculated.

Results

The search
300+ citations + 11 studies supplied by Eli Lilly (4 unpublished), 20 trials included. 12 await further information.

Olanzapine versus placebo
Outcome: no clinical effect

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Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics
Outcome: any extrapyramidal event

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Olanzapine vs placebo
Outcome: Leaving the study early

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Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics
Outcome: No clinical improvement

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Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics
Outcome: negative symptoms

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Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics
Outcome: leaving the study early

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Olanzapine vs atypical antipsychotics
No clear data exist from within trials to make any definitive comments on the use of olanzapine in those classed as treatment resistant.

Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics
No clear data exist from within trials to make any conclusive comments on the value of olanzapine in comparison to other novel drugs. Please see last point of “Conclusions”.

Olanzapine vs typical antipsychotics

Olanzapine versus placebo
Outcome: no clinical effect

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Conclusions

Olanzapine may offer antipsychotic efficacy with fewer extrapyramidal side effects than typical antipsychotics such as haloperidol or chlorpromazine.

The effects of olanzapine on negative symptoms are reported as favourable in largely company sponsored studies on scales that are difficult to interpret from a clinical standpoint.

Olanzapine may well afford more weight gain than other compounds.

The very great proportion of participants leaving the studies early makes it difficult to draw firm conclusions on any clinical effects.

Large, long-term simple randomised trials with participants recognisable to everyday practice, flexible intervention regimens and clinically meaningful outcomes are long overdue.

Comments

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