Effects of olanzapine and ziprasidone on cognitive outcome in recent-onset schizophrenia.

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Introduction

- Cognitive dysfunction is regarded a core symptom of schizophrenia. Second generation antipsychotics have been claimed to have a positive effect on the cognitive deficit.
- The first aim of the present study was to compare the effects of olanzapine and ziprasidone on cognitive outcome in recent onset schizophrenia.
- The second aim was to find out if switching blindly to the other antipsychotic would alter the cognitive outcome of a group of patients with insufficient clinical response.

Methods

- 52-week, double blind, parallel group, multicenter RCT
- Inclusion criteria: diagnosis of schizophrenia, schizo-affective or schizophreniform disorder; lifetime exposure to antipsychotics < 16 weeks; duration of illness < 5 years; CGI Severity score \(\geq 4\).
- Patients were administered a comprehensive battery of cognitive tests, assessing a broad array of cognitive domains.
- After 8 weeks, patients were classified as ‘responders’ and ‘non-responders’, with response criteria set at 20% reduction in the total PANSS score and the absence of major somatic side effects. Non-responders were offered a blind switch to the other antipsychotic.

Results

- 74 patients were randomized (Mean GAF = 34, mean PANSS = 80, mean CGI = 5). After 8 weeks, there were 34 responders and 22 non-responders.
- There were no significant differences in cognitive improvement between olanzapine and ziprasidone. The cognitive outcome was not correlated with clinical symptom rating scales.
- The group of non-responders that switched treatment showed no significant improvement after the next 8 weeks of treatment.

Discussion

- The results of this study indicate that olanzapine and ziprasidone have similar effects on cognitive outcome.
- Switching to the other antipsychotic in a subgroup of non-responders did not reveal any differences in cognitive outcome, for both antipsychotics.
- Our study contributes to the emerging body of evidence that there are no significant differences between antipsychotics in their ability to improve cognitive outcome.

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