Aripiprazole is effective against the symptoms of schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder


Q Is aripiprazole effective in people with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder?

Aripiprazole is effective against the symptoms of schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder. Aripiprazole is the first non-dopamine D2 receptor antagonist shown to have similar efficacy and greater tolerability compared with a leading atypical antipsychotic, aripiprazole has resulted in higher response rates compared with placebo (see web extra table 1).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Aripiprazole is a partial agonist at D2 dopamine receptors, and it shows a profile of efficacy and tolerability that is distinct from other atypical antipsychotics. Further studies are needed to determine the optimal dosing range and long-term safety of aripiprazole.

**METHODS**

- **Design**: Randomised controlled trial.
- **Allocation**: Unclear.
- **Blinding**: Double blind (participants and assessors).
- **Follow up period**: Four weeks.
- **Setting**: Forty medical centres in the USA; September 1997 to October 1998.
- **Patients**: A total of 404 people hospitalised with acute relapse of schizophrenia (n = 289) or schizoaffective disorder (n = 115), and 103 participants were hospitalised with acute relapse of bipolar disorder (n = 99), or placebo (n = 103). Participants were hospitalised for the entire study period.
- **Intervention**: Four weeks of: 20 mg/day aripiprazole (n = 101), 30 mg/day aripiprazole (n = 101), 6 mg/day risperidone (n = 99), or placebo (n = 103). Participants were hospitalised for the entire study period.
- **Outcomes**: Changes in PANSS scores from baseline, change in Clinical Global Impression-Severity of Illness (CGI-S) subscale score.
- **Patient follow up**: Dropout rates: 50% with placebo vs 40% with 20 mg/d aripiprazole vs 34% with 30 mg/d aripiprazole vs 37% with risperidone. Dropouts were due to worsening symptoms or lack of clinical improvement (10%), adverse effects (11%), or other reasons (19%).

**MAIN RESULTS**

Aripiprazole significantly improved overall PANSS score and CGI-S score compared with placebo (see web extra table 1).

**CONCLUSIONS**

Aripiprazole is the first non-dopamine D2 receptor antagonist shown to be effective against the positive and negative symptoms in schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder.