



Title **Novel Antipsychotics for Patients with Bipolar Disorder:
A Systematic Review**

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Aim

To assess the efficacy of four novel antipsychotic drugs (olanzapine, risperidone, quetiapine, and clozapine) both as monotherapy and as add-on therapy for acute and maintenance treatment of bipolar disorder, as compared to each other, and to classic antipsychotics.

Conclusions and results

Of 58 potentially relevant studies identified, eight randomized controlled trials met the inclusion criteria. Four of these studies were found to be of moderate quality, and four of low quality. Novel antipsychotic drugs were used as monotherapy for the acute treatment of mania in four studies; the other four studies considered novel antipsychotics as add-on therapy to regular treatment. In two studies, olanzapine was shown to be more effective than placebo for treating acute attacks of mania in patients with bipolar disorder. Along with a battery of other continuous clinical assessment measures, the Young Mania Rating Scale was used to measure improvement in primary clinical outcome. No clear advantage was observed in trials that compared olanzapine compared to lithium. Information on the efficacy of novel antipsychotics other than olanzapine as either monotherapy or add-on therapy of acute mania is limited and is not transparent. Studies show no significant difference between novel antipsychotics and traditional agents in the incidence of extrapyramidal side effects. At this stage, any conclusion regarding the costs and benefits of using novel antipsychotics over traditional therapies is premature.

Recommendations

Because of the limited information available about the use of novel antipsychotics to treat bipolar disorders, clinicians and patients should carefully weigh evidence concerning benefits and side effects when considering this therapy.

Methods

Clinical trials in which a novel antipsychotic drug was compared prospectively with placebo or with another agent for treating bipolar disorder were systematically reviewed. The Jadad scale was used to assess the quality of the included studies. Extracted data were analyzed using Cochrane Review Manager.

Further research/reviews required

Further analysis awaits new information from other trials that will soon be completed in this rapidly changing field.