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Content

Aripiprazole in Children and Adolescents with Tourettes Syndrome

**ARIPIPRAZOLE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS**

**WITH TOURETTES SYNDROME**

We read Chawla et al’s1 case report with great interest. Tourettes syndrome (TS) is one of those psychi- atric conditions, which can be frustrating for the treating clinician, patient and his family alike, due to its chronic nature, availability of only symptomatic treatment and relative absence of any known curative and preventive treatments. This article has refreshed our interest in the topic and particularly in the use of aripiprazole in TS in children and adolescents.

The value of aripiprazole for treating neuropsy- chiatric disorders in children has not been established yet, although individual cases and case series reports may give confidence to the clinicians for using aripiprazole in TS. There have been some other case reports2-4 and a couple of case series5-6, providing anec- dotal evidence of aripiprazole effectiveness in the treat- ment of tics in TS with an extremely favourable side effects profile.

Dehning et al report effective response to aripiprazole in a younger patient with TS having mul- tiple side effects to pimozide, sulpiride, and tiapride2. Prada et al found, aripiprazole to be efficacious in man- agement of the tics in Tourette’s disorder in two cases3. Inta et al described a case of a 20 year old suffering of both Tourette’s syndrome and obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD) that showed a quick and dramatic re- covery in symptomatology following a low-dose aripiprazole mono-therapy. Aripiprazole treatment was well tolerated with a long-term therapeutic response4.

Murphy et al, presented results of a retrospective chart review of six youth with TS and co morbid OCD who were treated over 12 weeks with aripiprazole with good effect5. Davies et al presented a case series of 11 patients (Age 7-50 yrs) from the UK and suggested that aripiprazole may well be useful for individuals with TS as response to it is often quick, dramatic, sus- tained and with few, generally mild and transient side effects6.

In this case report by Chawla et al, it is interesting to see depression as a co morbid condition to TS1. This

has very rarely been reported in literature with OCD and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) being the most common co morbid conditions. The evidence sug- gests that ‘treatment of the comorbid psychiatric disor- der may be more valuable than treatment of the core features of the syndrome”7.

Authors have not commented on the comorbidity of depression or any other condition in this case, at the time of their involvement. As one may wonder, any ob- servable improvement could be secondary to improve- ment of co morbid depression, use of antidepressant medication (if used) or to a combination of aripiprazole with antidepressants.

We agree with Chawla et al, that “the natural wax- ing and waning pattern of tics in Tourettes poses a major limitation to any drug treatment. Therefore, further well- designed controlled trials are clearly indicated to prove the efficacy of aripiprazole in the treatment of Tourettes syndrome”. The good news is that, researchers from University of Florida, have been conducting an open label, flexible dose study designed to evaluate the safety and efficacy of aripiprazole in TS (or chronic tic disor- der) in subjects with or without associated OCD symp- toms and with or without ADHD symptoms8 but results are yet to publish.

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