Reviewer's report

Title: Severe symptomatic hyponatremia during citalopram therapy

Version: 2 Date: 17 October 2003

Reviewer: Olav Spigset

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a short case report on hyponatremia as an adverse drug reaction caused by the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor citalopram. Although numerous such case reports have been published previously, the manuscript is an important reminder of a potentially serious adverse drug reaction.

Suggestions for revision:

1. End of abstract and conclusions: How closely do the authors think that the serum sodium levels should be followed? And is such a procedure justified (it depends e.g. on how rapid the hyponatremia develops). Is the alternative of recommending serum sodium measurements when (more or less diffuse) clinical symptoms appear more appropriate? Moreover, as the risk is highest during the first weeks of treatment, the time factor should perhaps also be taken into account?

2. Reference values for sodium, potassium etc. should be given in parentheses for the convenience of the reader.

3. Please specify the tests used to investigate adrenocortical and thyroid function.

4. It is stated that the patient was treated with 2 L of normal saline. Please specify (e.g. 0,9% sodium chloride, intravenously etc.)

5. When was phenytoin treatment stopped?

6. The discussion with regard to the mechanism, with citations from animal studies etc., should be fully referenced.

7. If treatment with an antidepressant has to be restarted in such a patient, which type would the authors suggest (or alternatively suggest to be avoided)?

What next?: Accept after minor compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No
Declaration of competing interests:

Fees and funding for research, lecturing and travelling from several manufacturers of antidepressants.