Reviewer's report

Title: Change in appetite as a predictor of weight changes during treatment with olanzapine

Version: 1 Date: 9 April 2010

Reviewer: Michael Kluge

GENERAL COMMENT:

Case and colleagues examine potential associations between change in appetite and weight changes during treatment with olanzapine, using data from 2 double-blind studies, an open label study and an observational trial. They report an inconsistent association between change in appetite and weight changes. The topic is interesting and the conclusion that 'early score changes on appetite assessment scales are not a useful predictor for long-term weight changes' plausible. However, there are several limitations to this manuscript:

1. The studies included markedly differ in terms of methodology, (double blind, open label...), appetite assessment scales, baseline demographics, dietary counseling and sample size. Accordingly, the authors could not pool the data but just describe them separately.

2. Just one study used validated scales.

3. It appears somewhat questionable to include a study in which “at enrolment patients had been taking 5–20 mg SOT daily between # 4 and # 52 weeks and experienced weight gain # 5 kg or a change of # 1 kg/m² BMI.”

4. The fact that only one study reported an increase but three a decrease of appetite is surprising. Indeed, there is evidence that appetite is increased with olanzapine what, for example, our group showed in a RCT (Kluge et al. Clozapine and olanzapine are associated with food craving and binge eating: results from a randomized double-blind study. J Clin Psychopharmacology 2007 Dec;27(6):662-6).

5. Unfortunately, the ms. cannot answer the interesting question how appetite and weight are related in olanzapine-induced weight gain.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Introduction

The introduction too broadly discusses potential reasons for weight gain related to the rather modest findings. Instead, it should be focussed on appetite and abnormal eating behaviour such as food craving and binge eating under treatment with olanzapine. (Interesting and strong associations between food craving and (some aspects) of binge eating with weight gain are displayed in
Table 2 but neither mentioned in the introduction nor discussion section.) (Major Compulsory Revision).
Please include the (sparse) relevant literature (e.g, see above; Theisen FM et al. The Spectrum of binge eating symptomatology in patients treated with clozapine and olanzapine.J Neural Transm. 2003 Jan;110(1):111-21.) (Minor Compulsory Revision)

Methods

Study design

The studies included need to be described in much more detail. This is particularly necessary as two of them are not fully published. (Minor Compulsory Revision)

Please put the reference just after the described study. (Minor Compulsory Revision)

Discussion

Please include the limitations listed above that are not already mentioned. (Minor Compulsory Revision)

Figures

Please consider to reduce the number of figures if possible. (Discretionary Revision)

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.