Quetiapine: A Novel Strategy of Psychopharmacological Treatment of Children with Autistic Disorder

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Objectives: Many autistic children have problems of eye contact and expressive language that limit the effectiveness of educational and behavioural interventions. Few controlled psychopharmacologic trials have been conducted in autistic children to determine which agents may be effective for these associated features. Methods: Twelve male children (7.0 +/- 3.2 years) with autistic disorder, diagnosed by ICD-10 criteria, completed a placebo-controlled, double-blind crossover trial of Quetiapine. Subjects were included in the study if their eye contact and expressive language was inadequate for their developmental level. Subjects had not tolerated or responded to other psychopharmacologic treatments (methylphenidate, clonidine or desipramine). Results: Teacher ratings on the Aberrant Behavior Checklist irritability, stereotypy, and inappropriate speech factors were slightly lower during treatment with Quetiapine than during treatment with placebo. Clinician ratings (Children's Psychiatric Rating Scale Autism, Anger and Speech Deviance factors; Children's Global Assessment Scale; Clinical Global Impressions efficacy) of videotaped sessions were not significantly different between Quetiapine and placebo. Discussion: Quetiapine was only modestly effective in the short-term treatment of irritability in some children with autistic disorder. (HK J Paediatr (new series) 2004;9:144-147)

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