

PIONEERING 'ATYPICAL ANTIPSYCHOTIC CLINIC' APPROACH OFFERS NEW HOPE TO SCHIZOPHRENIA PATIENTS

London, September 23 - Treating acutely ill schizophrenia patients in a 'super specialist' environment with newer and better tolerated atypical antipsychotic medication can lead to rapid and significant improvements in the symptoms of the illness according to Dr Lyn Pilowsky, from the team pioneering this new treatment approach at the Maudsley Hospital in London.

Patients who had responded badly to previous treatment were referred to the 'Atypical Antipsychotic Clinic' at the Maudsley Hospital in London, where they were evaluated to assess the effectiveness of new atypical antipsychotic agents in treating the symptoms of schizophrenia.

The evaluation, conducted by Dr Hugh Jones, Dr Shubulade Smith and Dr Pilowsky, involved schizophrenia patients referred to the clinic suffering from their first episode of acute illness, a relapse or because their symptoms had failed to respond fully to previous treatment. The patients were treated with one of the three atypical antipsychotics and their progress closely monitored. The results for the 21 patients treated with Seroquel ('quetiapine'), one of the atypical antipsychotics prescribed, were presented today to psychiatrists attending an international scientific meeting in London and reported that after only six weeks treatment, patients experienced a statistically significant improvement in their symptoms compared with previous treatment with standard antipsychotics. In addition, the results indicated that study patients taking quetiapine had a significant reduction in the number of side-effects they suffered when compared to their previous treatment.

Dr Pilowsky commented: "Many of the patients we see in the clinic have been referred to us because their symptoms have not responded to treatment or because they have stopped taking their medication due to side-effect problems and are suffering a relapse as a consequence. Treating these problematic patients in a super specialised setting helps us to successfully tackle many of the problems associated with standard antipsychotics, such as poor response, severe side effects problems and treatment non-compliance. The evidence is that the atypical antipsychotics we use, such as quetiapine, are effective even in some poorly responsive patients, and also avoid the highly unpleasant side-effects that conventional treatments can cause."

Quetiapine (Seroquel) is manufactured by AstraZeneca and is currently approved in more than forty markets, including US, Canada, Holland and South Africa. Quetiapine has been shown to be effective in the treatment of both positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia and has a favourable tolerability profile, with an incidence of EPS and serum prolactin elevation no different to placebo even at the highest recommended dosage.

Notes to Editors:

'Seroquel' is a trade mark, property of AstraZeneca Limited.

This press release does not necessarily reflect opinions of ECNP

Location: European College of Neuropsychopharmacology Congress, London, UK

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