

Efficacy of Aripiprazole in Bipolar Mania with Mixed Episodes, Rapid Cycling and Psychotic Symptoms

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Objective: This study demonstrates the efficacy of aripiprazole in patients with bipolar disorder, with subanalyses of patients experiencing acute mixed episodes, those with rapid cycling, and those with severe and psychotic symptoms.

Methods: Data were analysed from three 3-week, double-blind, multicentre studies of patients with acute mania in bipolar I disorder. A total of 899 patients were randomised to aripiprazole (n=515) or placebo (n=384). The main outcome measure was change from baseline in Young Mania Rating Scale (YMRS). Data from the three trials were pooled and the patient population was stratified according to whether the episode was manic or mixed, the presence of rapid cycling, the severity of symptoms and the presence of psychotic symptoms.

Results: Where patients were experiencing acute mixed episodes, treatment with aripiprazole resulted in significant reductions in YMRS compared to placebo (-9.7 vs -7.4, p=0.044), which was similar to reductions observed for patients with manic episodes (-10.4 vs -6.5, p<0.001). In patients with rapid cycling bipolar disorder, significant reductions in YMRS occurred with aripiprazole vs placebo (-10.6 vs -5.5, p=0.001). In patients presenting with more severe symptoms (YMRS >27), treatment with aripiprazole resulted in greater improvement vs placebo (-11.6 vs -6.8, p<0.001). Aripiprazole showed equal efficacy in patients with or without psychotic symptoms.

Conclusion: In this large, pooled analysis of aripiprazole in the treatment of mania in bipolar disorder, consistently significant improvements were seen in patients with manic or mixed episodes, rapid-cycling bipolar disorder, severe symptoms and in patients with or without psychotic symptoms.