

The rate of clinical response of oral loading sodium valproate in acutely manic patients.

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Achieving accelerated clinical response is desirable in patients with acute manic episode. We conducted a double blind randomized prospective study to compare the rate of clinical response of oral loading sodium valproate versus standard dose titration.

Fourty two patients who meet DSM-IV criteria for current manic episode and who had a young mania rating scale (YMRS) score between 20 and 50 were randomized to two treatments Valproate oral "loading" at a dose of 20mg/kg in divided doses for 7 days and Valproate "non loading" at a starting dose of 10mg/kg for 6 days followed with the standard dose of 20mg/kg. Each group contained 21 patients.

Patients were scored at day 0, 3, 5, and 7 by a blind rater using YMRS.

There were no significant differences between the groups in adverse effects and use of adjunctive tranquilizers. The efficacy of valproate in both groups was similar but the rate of improvement on YMRS over the first 3 days was significantly faster in the loading group.

Therefore, we propose that Valproate oral loading may induce a more rapid clinical response in acutely manic patients.