

1. Summary of findings

Objective: To evaluate clinical efficacy of clozapine in relation with its plasma level in a group of Chinese patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia. In addition, the relationship between plasma level and side effects were examined.

Method: Fifty-one patients with treatment-resistant schizophrenia were put on a fixed dose of clozapine at 300mg a day for 6 weeks. Non-responders to week 6 would receive a dose of 500mg a day in subsequent 6 weeks. Responders to week 6 continued to receive 300mg a day. Clozapine plasma levels were checked at week 6 and 12.

Results: No association was found between clozapine plasma level, response and side effects. Sodium valproate was found to elevate clozapine plasma level while lowering norclozapine: clozapine ratio. Incidentally, responders were found to gain more weight than non-responders.

Conclusion: Clozapine plasma level was not found to be associated with response and side effect in Chinese treatment-resistant schizophrenic patients. Future studies in different ethnic groups using a fixed plasma level regimen and more stringent inclusion criteria for treatment-resistance are needed to ascertain whether a concentration-response relationship exist.