

Atomoxetine in the treatment of Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and suicidal ideation (a case series)

C. Scavone (1), A. Capuano (1), C. Rafaniello (1), R. Arcieri (2), M.G. Sullo (1), L. Sportiello (1), P. Panei (2), F. Rossi (1).

(1) Campania Regional Centre of Pharmacovigilance and Pharmacoepidemiology, Department of Experimental Medicine, Section of Pharmacology L. Donatelli, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, Second University of Naples, Via De Crecchio, 7, 80138 Naples, Italy.

(2) Child Health Unit. Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutic Research. Istituto Superiore di Sanità (Italian National Institute of Health) Viale Regina Elena, 299 - 00161 Roma

Objective: ADHD is the most common psychiatric childhood disorder and the most commonly used drugs are methylphenidate (MPH) and atomoxetine (ATX); the former of the two is more prescribed in USA than in Western Europe. Some of the most important safety concerns about ADHD drug treatment are sudden cardiac death and suicidal behavior. In this study, we present a case series of Italian children who had presented suicidal ideation during ADHD pharmacological therapy with ATX.

Research design and methods: Data was obtained from the ADHD Italian Register, which assessed the use of MPH and ATX prescribed to patient, aged < 18 years, diagnosed with ADHD. All patients enrolled in the ADHD Italian Register, treated with ATX or MPH who experienced suicidal related events were considered and assessed.

Results: we describe 7 cases of Italian children treated with ATX and affected by suicidal ideation, self harming, or other similar symptoms. Our results highlighted that all 7 patients developed these symptoms during pharmaceutical treatment with ATX and, particularly, after the dose increase of the drug.

Conclusions: There is a need to improve the knowledge about the safety of ATX, MPH and other drugs used in the treatment of ADHD both in children and adults during the post-marketing experience.

Bibliography

1. Panei P, Arcieri R. ADHD register: post-marketing evaluation of the benefit-risk profile of drugs and promotion of the appropriateness. *Recenti Prog Med.* 2013;104:254-61.
2. Ruggiero S, Rafaniello C, Bravaccio C, Grimaldi G, Granato R, Pascotto A, Sportiello L, Parretta E, Rinaldi B, Panei P, Rossi F, Capuano A. Safety of Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder Medications in Children: An Intensive Pharmacosurveillance Monitoring Study. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology* 2012; 22: 415-422.
3. M. Impey, R. Heun. Completed suicide, ideation and attempt in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Acta Psychiatr Scand.* 2012. 125: 93-102.