

Clinical trials support new algorithm for treating pediatric bipolar mania

4 atypical antipsychotics are proposed as first-line therapy, based on current evidence

Five recent randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have demonstrated the efficacy of atypical antipsychotics for treating bipolar disorder in children and adolescents, but 4 of these 5 trials remain unpublished. The lag time between the completion of these trials and publication of their results—typically 4 to 5 years¹—leaves psychiatrists without important evidence to explain to families and critics² why they might recommend using these powerful medications in children with mental illness.

This article previews the preliminary results of these 5 RCTs of atypical antipsychotics, offers a treatment algorithm supported by this evidence, and discusses how to manage potentially serious risks when using antipsychotics to treat children and adolescents with bipolar disorder (BPD).

Where do atypical antipsychotics fit in?

Details of the 5 industry-sponsored RCTs of atypical antipsychotics in children and adolescents with bipolar I manic or mixed episodes are summarized in *Table 1 (page 24)*.³⁻⁷ Only the olanzapine study⁴ has been published; data from the other 4 trials were presented at medical meetings in 2007 and 2008.

Change in Young Mania Rating Scale (YMRS) score was the primary outcome measure in these 5 trials, and each compound was more effective than placebo. The trials demonstrated statistically significant and clinically relevant differences between each antipsychotic and placebo. The number needed to treat (NNT)—how

continued on page 23



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many patients need to be treated for 1 to benefit in a controlled clinical trial—ranged from 2 to 4. For comparison, the NNT for statins in the prevention of coronary events is 12 to 22,⁸ and the NNT in an analysis of trials of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors for pediatric major depressive disorder was 9.⁹ Thus, an NNT of ≤ 4 represents a clinically significant effect.

Risperidone is FDA-approved for short-term treatment of acute bipolar I manic or mixed episodes in patients age 10 to 17. Aripiprazole is approved for acute and maintenance treatment of bipolar I manic or mixed episodes (with or without psychosis) as monotherapy or with lithium or valproate in patients age 10 to 17. In June, an FDA advisory committee recommended pediatric bipolar indications for olanzapine, quetiapine, and ziprasidone.

'Mood stabilizers' such as lithium, valproate, and carbamazepine have been used for years to treat bipolar mania in adults, adolescents, and children, despite limited supporting evidence. Preliminary results of a National Institute of Mental Health-funded double-blind RCT provide insights on their efficacy.¹⁰

The 153 outpatients age 7 to 17 in a bipolar I manic or mixed episode were randomly assigned to lithium, divalproex, or placebo for 8 weeks. Response rates—based on a Clinical Global Impressions-Improvement score of 1 or 2 (very much or much improved)—were divalproex, 54%; lithium, 42%; and placebo, 29%. Lithium showed a trend toward efficacy but did not clearly separate from placebo on the primary outcome measures. Effect sizes for lithium and divalproex were moderate.¹⁰

Only 1 study has compared a mood stabilizer with an atypical antipsychotic for treating mania in adolescents. In a double-blind trial, DelBello et al¹¹ randomly assigned 50 patients age 12 to 18 with a bipolar I manic or mixed episode to quetiapine, 400 to 600 mg/d, or divalproex, serum level 80 to 120 $\mu\text{g}/\text{mL}$, for 28 days. Manic symptoms resolved more rapidly, and remission rates measured by the YMRS were higher with quetiapine than with divalproex. Both medications were well tolerated.

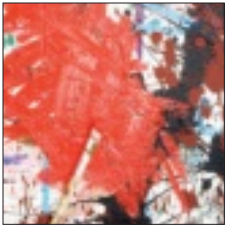
Combination therapy. BPD as it presents in children and adolescents is often difficult to treat because of the disorder's various phases (manic, depressed, mixed), frequent psychotic symptoms, and high rate of comorbidity. Pediatric BPD patients

CNS-active drugs [see *Warnings and Precautions* (5.13)]. **Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitors (MAOIs)**- Adverse reactions, some of which were serious, have been reported in patients who have recently been discontinued from a monoamine oxidase inhibitor (MAOI) and started on antidepressants with pharmacological properties similar to Pristiq (SNRIs or SSRIs), or who have recently had SNRI or SSRI therapy discontinued prior to initiation of an MAOI [see *Contraindications* (4.2)]. **Serotonergic Drugs**- Based on the mechanism of action of Pristiq and the potential for serotonin syndrome, caution is advised when Pristiq is coadministered with other drugs that may affect the serotonergic neurotransmitter systems [see *Warnings and Precautions* (5.2)]. **Drugs that Interfere with Hemostasis (eg, NSAIDs, Aspirin, and Warfarin)**- Serotonin release by platelets plays an important role in hemostasis. Epidemiological studies of case-control and cohort design have demonstrated an association between use of psychotropic drugs that interfere with serotonin reuptake and the occurrence of upper gastrointestinal bleeding. These studies have also shown that concurrent use of an NSAID or aspirin may potentiate this risk of bleeding. Altered anticoagulant effects, including increased bleeding, have been reported when SSRIs and SNRIs are coadministered with warfarin. Patients receiving warfarin therapy should be carefully monitored when Pristiq is initiated or discontinued. **Ethanol**- A clinical study has shown that desvenlafaxine does not increase the impairment of mental and motor skills caused by ethanol. However, as with all CNS-active drugs, patients should be advised to avoid alcohol consumption while taking Pristiq. **Potential for Other Drugs to Affect Desvenlafaxine**-Inhibitors of CYP3A4 (ketoconazole)- CYP3A4 is a minor pathway for the metabolism of Pristiq. Concomitant use of Pristiq with potent inhibitors of CYP3A4 may result in higher concentrations of Pristiq. **Inhibitors of other CYP enzymes**- Based on *in vitro* data, drugs that inhibit CYP isozymes 1A1, 1A2, 2A6, 2D6, 2C8, 2C9, 2C19, and 2E1 are not expected to have significant impact on the pharmacokinetic profile of Pristiq. **Potential for Desvenlafaxine to Affect Other Drugs**- Drugs metabolized by CYP2D6 (desipramine)- *In vitro* studies showed minimal inhibitory effect of desvenlafaxine on CYP2D6. Clinical studies have shown that desvenlafaxine does not have a clinically relevant effect on CYP2D6 metabolism at the dose of 100 mg daily. Concomitant use of desvenlafaxine with a drug metabolized by CYP2D6 can result in higher concentrations of that drug. **Drugs metabolized by CYP3A4 (midazolam)**- *In vitro*, desvenlafaxine does not inhibit or induce the CYP3A4 isozyme. Concomitant use of Pristiq with a drug metabolized by CYP3A4 can result in lower exposures to that drug. **Drugs metabolized by CYP1A2, 2A6, 2C8, 2C9 and 2C19**- *In vitro*, desvenlafaxine does not inhibit CYP1A2, 2A6, 2C8, 2C9, and 2C19 isozymes and would not be expected to affect the pharmacokinetics of drugs that are metabolized by these CYP isozymes. **P-glycoprotein Transporter**- *In vitro*, desvenlafaxine is not a substrate or an inhibitor for the P-glycoprotein transporter. The pharmacokinetics of Pristiq are unlikely to be affected by drugs that inhibit the P-glycoprotein transporter, and desvenlafaxine is not likely to affect the pharmacokinetics of drugs that are substrates of the P-glycoprotein transporter. **Electroconvulsive Therapy**- There are no clinical data establishing the risks and/or benefits of electroconvulsive therapy combined with Pristiq treatment. **USE IN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS: Pregnancy**- Patients should be advised to notify their physician if they become pregnant or intend to become pregnant during therapy. **Teratogenic effects—Pregnancy Category C**- There are no adequate and well-controlled studies of Pristiq in pregnant women. Therefore, Pristiq should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefits justify the potential risks. **Non-teratogenic effects**- Neonates exposed to SNRIs (Serotonin and Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitors), or SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), late in the third trimester have developed complications requiring prolonged hospitalization, respiratory support, and tube feeding. Such complications can arise immediately upon delivery. Reported clinical findings have included respiratory distress, cyanosis, apnea, seizures, temperature instability, feeding difficulty, vomiting, hypoglycemia, hypotonia, hypertonia, hyperreflexia, tremor, jitteriness, and constant crying. These features are consistent with either a direct toxic effect of SSRIs and SNRIs or, possibly, a drug discontinuation syndrome. It should be noted that, in some cases, the clinical picture is consistent with serotonin syndrome [see *Warnings and Precautions* (5.2)]. When treating a pregnant woman with Pristiq during the third trimester, the physician should carefully consider the potential risks and benefits of treatment [see *Dosage and Administration* (2.2)]. **Labor and Delivery**- The effect of Pristiq on labor and delivery in humans is unknown. Pristiq should be used during labor and delivery only if the potential benefits justify the potential risks. **Nursing Mothers**- Desvenlafaxine (O-desmethylvenlafaxine) is excreted in human milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants from Pristiq, a decision should be made whether or not to discontinue nursing or to discontinue the drug, taking into account the importance of the drug to the mother. Only administer Pristiq to breastfeeding women if the expected benefits outweigh any possible risk. **Pediatric Use**- Safety and effectiveness in the pediatric population have not been established [see *Box Warning and Warnings and Precautions* (5.1)]. Anyone considering the use of Pristiq in a child or adolescent must balance the potential risks with the clinical need. **Geriatric Use**- Of the 3,292 patients in clinical studies with Pristiq, 5% were 65 years of age or older. No overall differences in safety or efficacy were observed between these patients and younger patients; however, in the short-term, placebo-controlled studies, there was a higher incidence of systolic orthostatic hypotension in patients ≥ 65 years of age compared to patients < 65 years of age treated with Pristiq [see *Adverse Reactions* (6)]. For elderly patients, possible reduced renal clearance of desvenlafaxine should be considered when determining dose [see *Dosage and Administration* (2.2) and *Clinical Pharmacology* (12.6)]. If Pristiq is poorly tolerated, every other day dosing can be considered. SSRIs and SNRIs, including Pristiq, have been associated with cases of clinically significant hyponatremia in elderly patients, who may be at greater risk for this adverse event [see *Warnings and Precautions* (5.12)]. Greater sensitivity of some older individuals cannot be ruled out. **Renal Impairment**- In subjects with renal impairment the clearance of Pristiq was decreased. In subjects with severe renal impairment (24-hr CrCl < 30 mL/min) and end-stage renal disease, elimination half-lives were significantly prolonged, increasing exposures to Pristiq; therefore, dosage adjustment is recommended in these patients [see *Dosage and Administration* (2.2) and *Clinical Pharmacology* (12.6) in the full prescribing information]. **Hepatic Impairment**- The mean $t_{1/2}$ changed from approximately 10 hours in healthy subjects and subjects with mild hepatic impairment to 13 and 14 hours in moderate and severe hepatic impairment, respectively. No adjustment in starting dosage is necessary for patients with hepatic impairment.

OVERDOSAGE: Human Experience with Overdosage- There is limited clinical experience with desvenlafaxine succinate overdose in humans. In premarketing clinical studies, no cases of fatal acute overdose of desvenlafaxine were reported. The adverse reactions reported within 5 days of an overdose > 600 mg that were possibly related to Pristiq included headache, vomiting, agitation, dizziness, nausea, constipation, diarrhea, dry mouth, paresthesia, and tachycardia. Desvenlafaxine (Pristiq) is the major active metabolite of venlafaxine. Overdose experience reported with venlafaxine (the parent drug of Pristiq) is presented below; the identical information can be found in the *Overdosage* section of the venlafaxine package insert. In postmarketing experience, overdose with venlafaxine (the parent drug of Pristiq) has occurred predominantly in combination with alcohol and/or other drugs. The most commonly reported events in overdose include tachycardia, changes in level of consciousness (ranging from somnolence to coma), mydriasis, seizures, and vomiting. Electrocardiogram changes (eg, prolongation of QT interval, bundle branch block, QRS prolongation), sinus and ventricular tachycardia, bradycardia, hypotension, rhabdomyolysis, vertigo, liver necrosis, serotonin syndrome, and death have been reported. Published retrospective studies report that venlafaxine overdose may be associated with an increased risk of fatal outcomes compared to that observed with SSRI antidepressant products, but lower than that for tricyclic antidepressants. Epidemiological studies have shown that venlafaxine-treated patients have a higher pre-existing burden of suicide risk factors than SSRI-treated patients. The extent to which the finding of an increased risk of fatal outcomes can be attributed to the toxicity of venlafaxine in overdose, as opposed to some characteristic(s) of venlafaxine-treated patients, is not clear. Prescriptions for Pristiq should be written for the smallest quantity of tablets consistent with good patient management, in order to reduce the risk of overdose.

Management of Overdosage- Treatment should consist of those general measures employed in the management of overdose with any SSRI/SNRI. Ensure an adequate airway, oxygenation, and ventilation. Monitor cardiac rhythm and vital signs. General supportive and symptomatic measures are also recommended. Gastric lavage with a large-bore orogastric tube with appropriate airway protection, if needed, may be indicated if performed soon after ingestion or in symptomatic patients. Activated charcoal should be administered. Induction of emesis is not recommended. Because of the moderate volume of distribution of this drug, forced diuresis, dialysis, hemoperfusion, and exchange transfusion are unlikely to be of benefit. No specific antidotes for desvenlafaxine are known. In managing an overdose, consider the possibility of multiple drug involvement. The physician should consider contacting a poison control center for additional information on the treatment of any overdose. Telephone numbers for certified poison control centers are listed in the Physicians Desk Reference (PDR).

This brief summary is based on Pristiq Prescribing Information W10529C004, revised February 2009.



Pediatric mania

Clinical Point

A mood stabilizer plus an atypical antipsychotic may be more effective than a mood stabilizer alone for treating adolescent mania

Table 1

RCTs of atypical antipsychotics in patients age 10 to 17 with bipolar I disorder*

Antipsychotic and source	Bipolar I episode (# of subjects)	Trial duration (days)	Dosage (mg/d)	Response rate or YMRS score change	NNT	Mean weight gain (kg)
Risperidone Pandina et al ³ AACAP 2007	Manic, mixed (169)	21	0.5 to 2.5 3 to 6	59% 63%	3.3 3.5	1.9 1.4
Olanzapine Tohen et al ⁴	Manic, mixed (161)	21	10.4 ± 4.5	49%	4.1	3.7 ± 2.2
Quetiapine DelBello et al ⁵ AACAP 2007	Manic (284)	21	400 600	64% 58%	4.4 4.2	1.7 1.7
Aripiprazole Wagner et al ⁶ ACNP 2007	Manic, mixed (296)	28	10 30	45% 64%	4.1 2.4	0.9 0.54
Ziprasidone DelBello et al ⁷ APA 2008	Manic, mixed (238)	28	80 to 160	-13.83 with ziprasidone, -8.61 with placebo	3.7	None

*Each trial included a 6-month open extension phase; results are pending
AACAP: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; ACNP: American College of Neuropsychopharmacology;
APA: American Psychiatric Association; NNT: number needed to treat; RCT: randomized controlled trial; YMRS: Young Mania Rating Scale

frequently require several psychotropics, including mood stabilizers and atypical antipsychotics.

In a double-blind, placebo-controlled study, 30 adolescents in a bipolar I manic or mixed episode initially received divalproex, 20 mg/kg/d, then were randomly assigned to 6 weeks of adjunctive quetiapine, titrated to 450 mg/d in 7 days (n=15), or placebo (n=15). Those receiving divalproex plus quetiapine showed a statistically significant greater reduction in manic symptoms ($P = .03$) and a higher response rate (87% vs 53%, $P = .05$), compared with those receiving divalproex and placebo. This suggests that a mood stabilizer plus an atypical antipsychotic is more effective than a mood stabilizer alone for adolescent mania. Quetiapine was well tolerated.¹²

Treatment. The American Psychiatric Association's outdated 2002 practice guideline for acute bipolar I manic or mixed episodes in adults recommends lithium, valproate, and/or an antipsychotic.¹³ The more recent Texas Medication Algorithm Project (TMAP) guidelines recommend monotherapy with lithium, valproate, aripiprazole, quetiapine, risperidone, or

ziprasidone for adults with euphoric or irritable manic or hypomanic symptoms.¹⁴

Based on the TMAP algorithm, recent clinical trial evidence, and our experience in treating pediatric BPD, we offer an approach for treating mania/hypomania in patients age 10 to 17 (see *Proposed Algorithm, page 30*). For dosing and precautions when using atypical antipsychotics in children and adolescents with BPD, see *Table 2 (page 29)*.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

Comorbid psychiatric illnesses (such as anxiety disorders) are prevalent in adolescents with BPD. Evidence in adults and adolescents suggests that some atypical antipsychotics may provide additional benefit for these conditions as well. Thus, consider comorbid conditions and symptoms when choosing antimanic agents.

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a common comorbidity in children with BPD, and stimulant medications are most often prescribed to treat inattentiveness and hyperactivity. Caution is imperative when treating bipolar youth with stimulants, which can exacerbate manic symptoms. Treat the patient's mania before adding or reintroducing stimulant medication. Research and clinical experience sug-

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Table 2

Recommended antipsychotic use in pediatric bipolar disorder

Drug	Starting dosage (mg)	Target dosage (mg/d)	Precautions
Aripiprazole	2.5 to 5 at bedtime	10 to 30	Monitor for CYP 3A4 and 2D6 interactions, weight, BMI, cholesterol, lipids, and glucose
Olanzapine	2.5 bid	10 to 20	Monitor for CYP 2D6 interactions, weight, BMI, cholesterol, lipids, glucose, and prolactin levels
Quetiapine	50 bid	400 to 1,200	Monitor for weight, BMI, cholesterol, lipids, and glucose
Risperidone	0.25 bid	1 to 2.5	Monitor for EPS, hyperprolactinemia (and associated sexual side effects, including galactorrhea), weight, BMI, cholesterol, lipids, glucose, and prolactin levels
Ziprasidone	20 bid	80 to 160	Check baseline ECG and as dose increases or with reason for high level of concern; monitor prolactin levels

BMI: body mass index; CYP: cytochrome P450; ECG: electrocardiography; EPS: extrapyramidal symptoms

Source: References 15-17

gest that if you first stabilize these patients on a mood stabilizer or atypical antipsychotic, adding a stimulant can be very helpful in treating comorbid ADHD symptoms. Start with low stimulant doses, and increase slowly.

Managing adverse effects

Although clinically effective, atypical antipsychotics may cause serious side effects that must be recognized and managed. These include extrapyramidal symptoms (EPS), tardive dyskinesia (TD), weight gain and obesity, hyperlipidemia, increased prolactin levels, and QTc changes. Counsel patients and families about the risks and benefits of antipsychotics when you consider them for children and adolescents with BPD (*Table 3, page 31*).

EPS. Drug-induced parkinsonism and akathisia are the most common EPS in children and adolescents with BPD treated with atypical antipsychotics.¹⁸

Correll et al¹⁹ reported a 10% rate of EPS in patients treated with aripiprazole. Treatment-emergent EPS also was observed in the RCT of risperidone.²⁰ EPS-related adverse events were associated with higher doses of risperidone, although none of the akathisia/EPS measures were thought to be “clinically significant.”

EPS frequency was relatively low and similar to placebo in the 3-week quetiapine trial,²¹ and no changes in movement disorder scale scores were observed during the olanzapine or ziprasidone RCTs.^{4,7}

Recommendations. If your pediatric patient develops EPS, first try an antipsychotic dose reduction. Because anticholinergics can contribute to antipsychotic-induced weight gain, reserve them until after a dosage reduction has been unsuccessful.

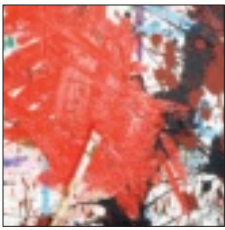
Benzotropine (0.25 to 0.5 mg given 2 to 3 times daily, not to exceed 3 mg/d) or diphenhydramine (25 to 50 mg given 3 to 4 times daily; maximum dosage 5 mg/kg/d) can be effective in treating EPS. Avoid anticholinergics in children with narrow-angle glaucoma or age <3.

Akathisia may be managed with propranolol (20 to 120 mg/d in divided doses). Multiple doses (typically 3 times daily) are needed to prevent interdose withdrawal symptoms. Use this beta blocker with caution in children with asthma because of the possibility of bronchospasm.

TD. Short-term trials and a meta-analysis of atypical antipsychotic trials (>11 months' duration, subject age <18) suggest a low annual risk for TD (0.4%).²² Large, prospective, long-term trials of atypical antipsychotics are necessary to more accurately define the risk of TD in the pediatric population, how-

Clinical Point

If EPS develop, first try reducing the antipsychotic dose; an anticholinergic might be next, unless contraindicated



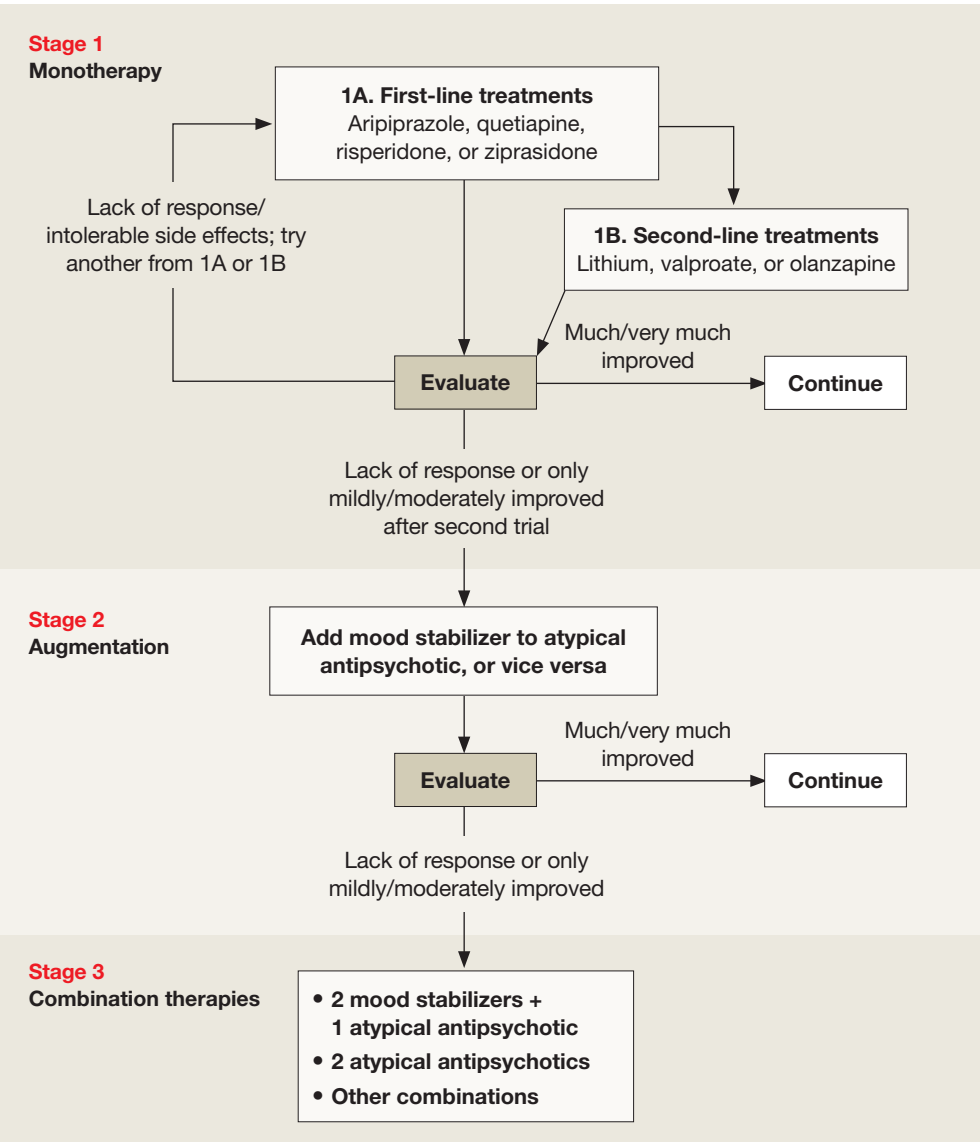
Pediatric mania

Clinical Point

Propranolol may manage akathisia, but use this agent with caution in children with asthma because of the risk of bronchospasm

Proposed Algorithm

Treating a bipolar mixed/manic episode in patients age 10 to 17



Stage 1. Consider patient’s experience with antipsychotics, body weight, and family history when choosing first-line monotherapy (1A). Quetiapine poses low risk for extrapyramidal symptoms and tardive dyskinesia. Aripiprazole and ziprasidone pose relatively low risk of weight gain. Risperidone is potent at low doses but increases prolactin levels (long-term effect unknown).

Second-line choices (1B) are mood stabilizers lithium and valproate (because of lower potency than atypical antipsychotics), and olanzapine (which—although potent—causes substantial weight gain). In case of lack of response or intolerable side effects with initial agent, select an alternate from 1A or 1B. If this is not effective, move to Stage 2.

Stage 2. Consider augmentation for patients who show partial response to monotherapy (in your clinical judgment “mild to moderately improved” but not “much or very much improved”).

Stage 3. Combination therapy could include 2 mood stabilizers (such as lithium and valproate) plus an atypical antipsychotic; 2 atypical antipsychotics; or other combinations based on patient’s past responses. No research has shown these combinations to be efficacious in bipolar children and adolescents, but we find they sometimes help those with treatment-resistant symptoms.

Duration. Maintain psychotropics 12 to 18 months. When patient is euthymic, slowly taper 1 medication across several months. If symptoms recur, reintroduce the mood-stabilizing agent(s).

Source: Adapted and reprinted with permission from Kowatch RA, Fristad MA, Findling R, et al. Clinical manual for the management of bipolar disorder in children and adolescents. Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc.; 2008

ever. Retrospective analyses of adolescents treated with antipsychotics suggest 3 TD risk factors:

- early age of antipsychotic use
- medication nonadherence
- concomitant use of antiparkinsonian agents.²³

Kumra et al²⁴ identified lower premorbid functioning and greater positive symptoms at baseline as factors associated with “withdrawal dyskinesia/tardive dyskinesia” in children and adolescents with early-onset psychotic-spectrum disorders treated with typical or atypical antipsychotics.

Recommendations. To minimize TD risk, use the lowest effective antipsychotic dose, monitor for abnormal involuntary movements with standardized assessments (such as the Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale), review risks and benefits with parents and patients, and regularly evaluate the indication and need for antipsychotic therapy. It is reasonable to attempt to lower the antipsychotic dose after the patient has attained remission and been stable for 1 year.

Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS). This complication of dopamine-blocking medications:

- is among the most serious adverse effects of antipsychotic treatment
- continues to be associated with a mortality rate of 10%.²⁵

Recommendation. At least 1 recent review of pediatric NMS cases suggests that essential features (hyperthermia and severe muscular rigidity) are retained in children.²⁶ Nonetheless, monitor for variant presentations; hyperthermia or muscle rigidity may be absent or develop slowly over several days in patients treated with atypical antipsychotics.²⁷

Weight gain and glucose metabolism. A major adverse effect of most atypical antipsychotics is increased appetite, weight gain, and possible obesity.²⁸ In children, “obesity” refers to a body mass index (BMI) >95th percentile for age and sex; “overweight” refers to BMI between the 85th and 95th percentile. Mean weight gain in the 5 atypical antipsychotic pediatric bipo-

Table 3

Talking to families about using antipsychotics in children with bipolar disorder

Effectiveness. Large, placebo-controlled studies have shown that atypical antipsychotics can significantly reduce manic symptoms in children and adolescents with bipolar disorder

Safety data. Additional 6-month safety data indicate that atypical antipsychotics continue to be effective in children and adolescents, without dramatic changes in side effects

Precautions. Antipsychotics are powerful medications and must be used carefully in pediatric patients

Potential side effects. All antipsychotics have serious potential side effects that must be recognized, monitored, and managed

Potential benefits from using atypical antipsychotics include mood stabilization, treatment of psychotic symptoms, and lower risk of extrapyramidal symptoms compared with typical antipsychotics

Risk vs benefit. On balance, the potential benefit of these agents outweighs the potential risk for children and adolescents with bipolar disorder

lar trials ranged from 0 to 8 lbs across 3 to 4 weeks of treatment (*Figure, page 32*).³⁻⁷

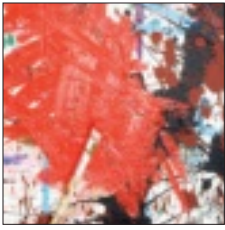
Recommendations. Emphasize diet and exercise, with restriction of high-carbohydrate food, “fast foods,” and soft drinks. Another option is a trial of metformin, which decreases hepatic glucose production, decreases intestinal absorption of glucose, and improves insulin sensitivity by increasing peripheral glucose uptake and utilization.

Klein et al²⁹ studied 39 patients age 10 to 17 with mood and psychotic disorders whose weight increased by >10% during <1 year of olanzapine, risperidone, or quetiapine therapy. In this 16-week, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, weight was stabilized in subjects receiving metformin, whereas those receiving placebo continued to gain weight (0.31 kg [0.68 lb]/week).

The usual starting metformin dose is 500 mg bid with meals. Increase in increments of 500 mg weekly, up to a maximum

Clinical Point

Watch for variants of neuroleptic malignant syndrome; hyperthermia or muscle rigidity may be absent or develop over several days



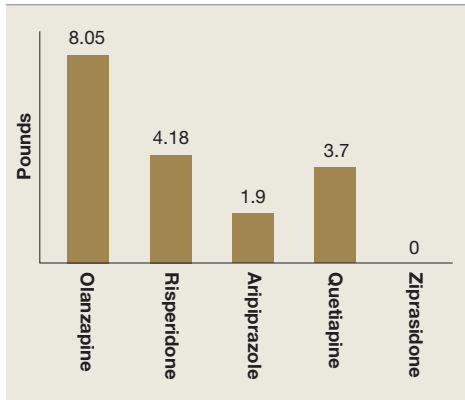
Pediatric mania

Clinical Point

For weight control, emphasize diet and exercise; another option is a trial of metformin, starting with 500 mg twice daily with meals

Figure

Mean weight gain with atypical antipsychotics in pediatric bipolar trials



Weight gain in children and adolescents with bipolar disorder varied among atypical antipsychotics used in 5 recent randomized controlled trials. Treatment duration was 3 weeks with olanzapine, risperidone, and quetiapine and 4 weeks with aripiprazole and ziprasidone. Dosages were olanzapine, 10.4 ± 4.5 mg/d; risperidone, 0.5 to 2.5 mg/d or 3 to 6 mg/d; aripiprazole, 10 or 30 mg/d; quetiapine, 400 or 600 mg/d; and ziprasidone, 80 to 160 mg/d.

Source: References 3-7

of 2,000 mg/d in divided doses. Potential side effects include diarrhea, nausea/vomiting, flatulence, and headache.

Hyperlipidemia. Patients who gain weight with atypical antipsychotics also may develop hyperlipidemia. Fasting serum triglycerides >150 mg/dL (1.70 mmol/L) in obese children are considered to be elevated and an early sign of metabolic syndrome.³⁰ Fasting total cholesterol >200 mg/dL (5.18 mmol/L) or low-density lipoprotein cholesterol >130 mg/dL (3.38 mmol/L) is consistent with hyperlipidemia.

Recommendation. Monitor and treat hyperlipidemia, which increases the risk of atherosclerosis as obese children grow older.³¹

Prolactin. Elevated prolactin concentrations may have deleterious effects in the developing child or adolescent, including gynecomastia, oligomenorrhea, and amenorrhea.¹⁷ Long-term effects on growth and sexual maturation have not been fully evaluated.

The relative tendency of atypical anti-

psychotics to cause hyperprolactinemia is roughly: risperidone/paliperidone > olanzapine > ziprasidone > quetiapine > clozapine > aripiprazole.¹⁸ In the risperidone RCT, mean changes in baseline prolactin levels were 41 ng/mL for boys and 59 ng/mL in girls.³ Results of the olanzapine RCT suggest a high incidence of hyperprolactinemia (26% of girls, 63% of boys).⁴ Decreases in serum prolactin were observed in bipolar children and adolescents treated with aripiprazole for 30 weeks.¹⁹

Recommendations. For any pediatric patient treated with an atypical antipsychotic that increases prolactin levels:

- Obtain a baseline prolactin level.
- Repeat after 6 months of treatment or with the emergence of elevated prolactin symptoms, such as gynecomastia in boys. Ask about increases in breast size, galactorrhea, changes in menstruation, sexual functioning, and pubertal development.

Switch patients who develop any of these side effects to another atypical agent that does not increase serum prolactin.³²

QTc interval prolongation. All atypical antipsychotics can cause QTc prolongation. Several cases of significant QTc prolongation have been reported in children and adolescents treated with ziprasidone.^{33,34} In the RCT of ziprasidone, QTc prolongation was not clinically significant in most of the patients in which it was reported, and it did not lead to adverse events.³⁴ Mean QTc change was 8.1 msec at study termination.⁷

Patients enrolled in clinical trials are screened very carefully, however, and those with preexisting medical abnormalities typically are excluded. Thus, these findings may have limited usefulness for “real-world” patients.

Recommendations. Until additional information is known about the cardiac effects of atypical antipsychotics in children and adolescents:

- Perform a careful history, review of symptoms, and physical exam looking for any history of palpitations, shortness of breath, or syncope.
- Query specifically about any family history of sudden cardiac death.
- Perform a baseline resting ECG for pa-

tients starting ziprasidone or clozapine, or for other atypicals if indicated by history, review of systems, physical exam, etc.

- For patients treated with ziprasidone or clozapine, repeat ECG as the dose increases or if the patient has cardiac symptoms (unexplained shortness of breath, palpitations, skipped beats, etc.).

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13. Practice guideline for the treatment of patients with bipolar

Related Resources

- Child and Adolescent Bipolar Foundation. www.bpkids.org.
- University of Illinois at Chicago Pediatric Mood Disorders Clinic. www.psych.uic.edu/pmdc.
- Ryan Licht Sang Bipolar Foundation. www.ryanlichtsangbipolarfoundation.org.

Drug Brand Names

Aripiprazole • Abilify	Olanzapine • Zyprexa
Benzotropine • Cogentin	Paliperidone • Invega
Carbamazepine • Carbatrol	Propranolol • Inderal
Clozapine • Clozaril	Quetiapine • Seroquel
Diphenhydramine • Benadryl	Risperidone • Risperdal
Divalproex sodium • Depakote	Valproate • Depacon
Lithium • Lithobid, others	Ziprasidone • Geodon
Metformin • Glucophage	

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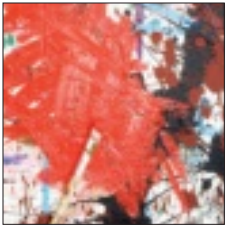
Clinical Point

If a patient develops elevated prolactin symptoms, switch to a different atypical antipsychotic that does not increase serum prolactin

Bottom Line

Studies of 5 atypical antipsychotics' efficacy and tolerability support their use for treating acute mania in children and adolescents. Four of these agents can be justified as first-line treatments, before lithium or divalproex. At the same time, antipsychotics' potentially serious side effects—extrapyramidal symptoms, tardive dyskinesia, weight gain, hyperlipidemia, hyperprolactinemia, and QTc changes—must be recognized, monitored, and managed.

continued



Pediatric mania

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