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QUETIAPINE IN ALCOHOL RELAPSE PREVENTION - A CASE SERIES

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Objectives: Research has shown that Quetiapine reduce the craving and consumption for stimulants and alcohol. Due to Quetiapine's particulars and the promising receptor profile concerning addiction medicine, we set out to examine the tolerability and efficacy concerning relapse prevention of withdrawn alcoholics suffering from additional symptoms.

Methods: Our case observations attempted to evaluate nine alcoholics after withdrawal suffering from persisting craving, sleep disorder, excitement, depressive symptoms or anxiety symptoms. The patients were treated with quetiapine as relapse prevention and we followed them up in our outpatient clinic.

Results: Eight out of nine patients were abstinent under quetiapine over a period of 2 to 7 months. One of these patients relapsed after he stopped taking the preparation at his own initiative after 10 weeks. The ninths patient stopped taking the preparation immediately because of swollen nasal mucosae. All target symptoms disappeared in the patients after an average of [mean \pm SD] 24.5 ± 18.1 days. The overall tolerability was considered to be very good, however initial sleepiness appeared in four patients.

Conclusion: Patients reported to be very satisfied with the medication. Reports about clearly reduced craving seem particularly worthy of attention. Although uncontrolled case observations can only be interpreted with caution quetiapine seems to deserve further investigation. A double-blind placebo-controlled study is in preparation to confirm these preliminary findings. Quetiapine may hold the potential for preventing alcohol relapse in alcoholics suffering from additional above mentioned symptoms, or as an alternative in alcoholics who do neither tolerate acamprosate nor naltrexone.