



University
of Glasgow

Krishnadas, R. (2011) *Two points of clinical interest*. British Medical Journal, 342 . d2148-d2148. ISSN 0959-535X

Copyright © 2011 BMJ Publishing Group Ltd.

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.

The content must not be changed in any way or reproduced in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holder(s)

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details must be given.

<http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/51338/>

Deposited on: 24th January 2013

LETTERS

ATYPICAL ANTIPSYCHOTIC DRUGS

Two points of clinical interest

Rajeev Krishnadas *clinical lecturer in psychological medicine*

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, UK

Two points of clinical interest add to Mackin and Thomas's summary of the indications for and use of atypical antipsychotic drugs.¹

Firstly, up to 5% of patients with schizophrenia commit suicide,² which is similar to the rates in major depression and considerably higher than those in the general population. Suicidal ideation at initial presentation is thought to predict suicide attempt in the near future.³ Clozapine is the only antipsychotic drug with an anti-suicidal effect,⁴ so it may be useful in clinically significant suicidal ideation, especially secondary to psychotic symptoms.

Secondly, recent long term follow-up data suggest that antipsychotic use may be an independent risk factor for generalised and specific reduction in grey matter volume.⁵ This effect was dose dependent, the changes were subtle, and atypical antipsychotics were milder than typical antipsychotics.

Antipsychotic use must therefore be judicious and the minimal effective dose tailored to each patient.

Competing interests: None declared.

- 1 Mackin P, Thomas SH. Atypical antipsychotic drugs. *BMJ* 2011;342:d1126. (4 March.)
- 2 Palmer BA, Pankratz VS, Bostwick JM. The lifetime risk of suicide in schizophrenia: a reexamination. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2005;62:247-53.
- 3 Bertelsen M, Jeppesen P, Petersen L, Thorup A, Ohlenschlaeger J, le Quach P, et al. Suicidal behaviour and mortality in first-episode psychosis: the OPUS trial. *Br J Psychiatry* 2007;51:s140-6.
- 4 Meltzer HY, Alphs L, Green AI, Altamura AC, Anand R, Bertoldi A, et al. Clozapine treatment for suicidality in schizophrenia: International Suicide Prevention Trial (InterSePT). *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2003;60:82-91.
- 5 Ho BC, Andreasen NC, Ziebell S, Pierson R, Magnotta V. Long-term antipsychotic treatment and brain volumes: a longitudinal study of first-episode schizophrenia. *Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2011;68:128-37.

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2011;342:d2148