Effectiveness of the Combination of Memantine Plus Vitamin D on Cognition in Patients With Alzheimer Disease: A Pre-Post Pilot Study

Submitted by Emmanuel Lemoine on Wed, 04/22/2015 - 16:42

Titre Effectiveness of the Combination of Memantine Plus Vitamin D on Cognition in Patients With Alzheimer Disease: A Pre-Post Pilot Study

Type de publication Article de revue

Auteur Annweiler, Cédric [1], Herrmann, François R [2], Fantino, Bruno [3], Brugg, Bernard [4], Beauchet, Olivier [5]

Editeur Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins

Type Article scientifique dans une revue à comité de lecture

Année 2012

Langue Anglais

Date 2012

Numéro 3

Pagination 121-127 10.1097/WNN.0b013e31826df647

Volume 25

Titre de la revue Cognitive and Behavioral Neurology

ISSN 1543-3633

Mots-clés 00146965-201209000-00003 [6], Alzheimer Disease [7], memantine [8], older adults [9], pre-post study [10], Vitamin D [11]

Objective: To determine whether treatment with memantine plus vitamin D is more effective than memantine or vitamin D alone in improving cognition among patients with Alzheimer disease (AD). Methods: We studied 43 white outpatients (mean 84.7±6.3 years; 65.1% women) with a new diagnosis of AD, who had not taken antidementia drugs or vitamin D supplements. We prescribed memantine alone (n=18), vitamin D alone (n=17), or memantine plus vitamin D (n=8) for an average of 6 months. We assessed cognitive change with the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE). We used age, sex, pre-treatment MMSE score, and duration of treatment as covariables. Results: Before treatment, the 3 groups had comparable MMSE scores. At 6 months, participants taking memantine plus vitamin D increased their MMSE score by 4.0±3.7 points (P=0.034), while participants taking memantine alone remained stable (change of 0.0±1.8 points; P=0.891), as did those taking vitamin D alone (−0.6±3.1 points; P=0.504). Treatment with memantine plus vitamin D was associated with improvement in the MMSE score compared to memantine or vitamin D alone after adjustment for covariables (P<0.01). Mixed regression analysis showed that the visit by combined treatments (memantine plus vitamin D) interaction was significant (P=0.001), while memantine or vitamin D alone showed no effect. Conclusions: Patients with AD who took memantine plus vitamin D for 6 months had a statistically and clinically relevant gain in cognition, underlining possible synergistic and potentiating benefits of the combination.
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