

EFFICACY OF ARIPIRAZOLE ON BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS IN THREE YOUNG PATIENTS WITH SEVERE ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

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The atypical antipsychotic drug aripiprazole has a partial agonist activity on the dopamine receptors. This characteristic makes aripiprazole different from other antipsychotic agents.

In this paper, we aim to describe the use of this drug in the management of three young patients with acquired brain injury: a woman with Wilsons disease, a male with a rupture of an arteriovenous malformation and a male with severe traumatic brain injury.

All patients presented behavioural symptoms. One of them presented frequent crises of psychomotor agitation with strong physical aggressive reaction, partial awareness and low frustration tolerance. The other two patients reported a prevalence of negative symptoms, as inactivity, apathy, lack of will and severe perseveration.

They were referred to our Unit and were evaluated with a full functional assessment at the moment of admission and at the discharge, depending on their clinical picture. The evaluation included: MMSE (Mini Mental State Examination), LCF (Level of Cognitive Functioning), DRS (Disability Rating Scale) and FIM (Functional Independence Measure). The behavioural assessment was made with clinical interviews.

After the introduction of aripiprazole, we found an improvement in the behavioural pattern, moreover neuropsychological and motor evaluation appeared not affected.

These results suggest that the use of aripiprazole in patients with acquired brain injury is suitable for its efficacy in reducing psychotic and behavioural symptoms but also for its potential for not affecting motor and cognitive functioning.