
DRIVING PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOMOTOR FUNCTION IN DEPRESSED PATIENTS TREATED WITH AGOMELATINE OR VENLAFAXINE

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Objective: The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of agomelatine and venlafaxine on driving skills and on driving performance in an on-road driving test in depressed inpatients.

Method: 40 depressed inpatients were randomly assigned to treatment with either agomelatine (n=20) or venlafaxine (n=20). Patients were tested before pharmacologic treatment (t₀), and on days 14 (t₁) and 28 (t₂) with computerized tests and additionally were rated in an on-road driving test on day 28 by a licensed driving instructor. To control for retest effects a group of 20 healthy subjects was examined in the same time schedule.

Results: After two weeks of treatment with agomelatine or venlafaxine patients showed a significant reduction in depressive symptoms, and a distinct improvement in concentration and stress-tolerance. Furthermore, prior discharge to outpatient treatment (day 28), 72.5% of patients were labeled abundantly fit to drive in the on-road driving test, in 22.5 % of cases a satisfactory performance was certified and in 5% of our patient sample there were slight concerns with respect to fitness to drive . Patients did not however reach performance level in functional domains of healthy controls. Significant differences between treatment groups could not be observed.

Conclusion: Our results indicate that depressed patients treated with agomelatine or venlafaxine show a better test performance on tasks related to driving skills than do untreated patients Besides, most patients could be rated as fit to drive, on an actual driving test conducted by a licensed driving instructor, prior discharge to outpatient treatment.