Barriers to the use of long-acting injectable antipsychotics in patients with schizophrenia: a survey to understand clinician educational needs

Leslie Citrome, Emily Belcher, Sylvie Stacy, Mark Suett, Marko Mychaskiw, Gregory D. Salinas

New York Medical College, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Valhalla, NY, USA (LC); CE Outcomes, LLC, Department of Research and Assessment, Birmingham, AL, USA (EB, SS, GDS); Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Global Medical Affairs, West Chester, PA, USA (MS); Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Global Health Economics and Outcomes Research, West Chester, PA, USA (MM)

Objective

- To identify key barriers to the treatment of schizophrenia and the use of LAI antipsychotic therapy in order to better understand and inform continuing educational efforts for clinicians

Introduction

- Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder characterized by disturbances in thought, perception, and behavior that impair daily functioning and quality of life (QoL).
- Primary treatment goals include long-term stabilization and relapse prevention.
- Data suggest that long-acting injectable (LAI) antipsychotics may improve long-term outcomes compared with oral medications, likely because of improved treatment adherence. However, LAI antipsychotics are often used late in the course of the disease as a last resort.

Methods

- A survey approach was used to assess multiple facets of clinical practice patterns, clinicians' attitudes and barriers to the use of LAI antipsychotics.
- The survey was developed in collaboration with a schizophrenia expert, tested among 4 practicing psychiatric clinicians, and distributed via email in September 2019.
- Responses were collected via an online survey platform.
- Results were organized into specific topics, including:
  - LAI suitability
  - Barriers to optimal patient care

Results

- Characteristics of clinicians:
  - The study sample consisted of 379 United States-based clinicians (302 psychiatrists and 77 psychiatric nurse practitioners [NPs]/physician assistants [PAs]) who currently manage patients with schizophrenia (Table 1).
  - Compared with NPs/PAs, psychiatrists reported more time in psychiatry practice (22.3 versus 13.4 years).
  - Psychiatrists reported seeing more patients overall (mean patients per week: 78.8 versus 46.5) and more patients with schizophrenia (mean patients per month: 45.6 versus 29.9) than NPs/PAs.
  - The percentage of pediatric patients was similar between psychiatrists and NPs/PAs (17% versus 21%, respectively).
  - The majority of clinicians reported working in an urban or suburban location.

Conclusions

- In order to drive change, future education should focus on specific areas of need.
- The results of this study suggest that education on the topic of schizophrenia management should focus less on knowledge of LAI antipsychotics and more on benefits of newer therapies, strategies to smoothly transition patients from oral treatments, and ways to reduce key barriers.
- Further analysis of this clinician-focused data will aim to identify factors that drive the choice to recommend LAI antipsychotic therapy; a separate survey will also assess the educational needs of caregivers in the management of schizophrenia.

References


Acknowledgments and Disclosures

Editorial support was provided by Jennifer Dillner and Jason Tuffree of SimenScientific (an Ashfield Company, part of UDG Healthcare plc), and was funded by Teva Pharmaceutical Industries. Teva provided a full review of the poster.

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Support for this study was provided by Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.
Introduction

- Schizophrenia is a chronic and severe mental disorder characterized by disturbances in thought, perception and behavior that impair daily functioning and quality of life (QoL)\(^1\)
- Primary treatment goals include long-term stabilisation and relapse prevention\(^1\)
- Data suggest that long-acting injectable (LAI) antipsychotics may improve long-term QoL compared with oral medications, likely because of improved treatment adherence;\(^2\) however, LAI antipsychotics are often used late in the course of the disease as a last resort\(^3\)

\(^1\) Reference
\(^2\) Reference
\(^3\) Reference
To identify key barriers to the treatment of schizophrenia and the use of LAI antipsychotic therapy in order to better understand and inform continuing educational efforts for clinicians.
Methods

- A survey approach was used to assess multiple facets of clinical practice patterns, clinicians’ attitudes and barriers to the use of LAI antipsychotics.
- The survey was developed in collaboration with a schizophrenia expert, tested among 4 practicing psychiatric clinicians and distributed via email in September 2019.
- Responses were collected via an online survey platform.
- Results were organised into specific topics, including:
  - LAI suitability
  - Barriers to optimal patient management
  - Barriers to optimal use of LAI antipsychotics in schizophrenia
  - Confidence in schizophrenia management
  - Comfort in LAI transitioning conversation
  - Future information seeking
- A combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology was used to analyse the data.
### Table 1. Characteristics of Clinicians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age, mean years (SD)</td>
<td>52.6 (7.2)</td>
<td>52.4 (7.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60 (58.8%)</td>
<td>75 (63.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>43 (41.2%)</td>
<td>45 (36.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical specialty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal medicine</td>
<td>37 (35.7%)</td>
<td>48 (39.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>39 (38.2%)</td>
<td>37 (30.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical care medicine</td>
<td>21 (20.4%)</td>
<td>24 (19.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance service</td>
<td>10 (9.8%)</td>
<td>10 (8.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3 (2.9%)</td>
<td>2 (1.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in practice</td>
<td>15.2 (7.3)</td>
<td>16.1 (9.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in practice in oncology</td>
<td>8.2 (6.1)</td>
<td>8.4 (8.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Barriers to Optimal Patient Management**

Barrier to optimal patient management

- Limited availability of antidepressants
- Insufficient knowledge of antidepressant indications
- Insufficient knowledge of antidepressant side effects
- Lack of adequate resources
- Time constraints
- Limited access to mental health professionals
- Patient non-adherence
- Medication side effects
- Fear of interactions with other medications

**Figure 1. Barriers to Optimal Patient Management**

**Figure 2. Barriers to Optimal Use of LAI Antipsychotics in Schizophrenia**

**Figure 3. Confidence in Schizophrenia Management**

Survey question: How confident are you in the following aspects of schizophrenia management?

- Treatment (50)
- Medication management (50)
- Patient education and support (50)
- Monitoring and follow-up (50)
- Treatment adherence (50)

**Figure 4. Comfort in LAI Transition Conversation**

Survey question: How comfortable are you in initiating a recommendation to transition from an oral medication to an LAI?

- Very comfortable (50)
- Somewhat comfortable (50)
- Neutral (50)
- Somewhat uncomfortable (50)
- Very uncomfortable (50)

**Figure 5. Future Information Seeking**

Survey question: In the future, which of the following information would you find valuable for managing patients with schizophrenia?

- Treatment for side effects
- Treatment for relapse prevention
- Treatment for social functioning
- Management of side effects
- Effectiveness of multiple treatments
- Contraindications
- Management of negative symptoms
- Nonspecifics of schizophrenia
- Social support

- N/A (50)
Conclusions

• In order to drive change, future education should focus on specific areas of need.

• The results of this study suggest that education on the topic of schizophrenia management should focus less on knowledge of LAI antipsychotics and more on benefits of newer therapies, strategies to smoothly transition patients from oral treatments and ways to reduce key barriers.

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