

EFFICACY OF ANTIDEPRESSANTS IN OPIOID DEPENDENCE, IMPLICATIONS OF COMORBID DEPRESSION: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META-ANALYSIS

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BACKGROUND

Opioid dependence is a chronic disease with a high rate of impairment at personal, familiar and social levels. It is well recognised that major depression is one of the most prevalent comorbid psychiatric disorders in opioid-dependent subjects (44-54% prevalence) (Astals et al., 2008). The prognosis of these subjects is poor and previous studies have emphasized the need of treatment to improve both depression and opioid dependence disorder.

We here present a systematic review of the literature of the efficacy of antidepressant drugs in subjects with opioid dependence disorder with and without a definite diagnosis of comorbid depression.

METHODS

A systematic review and meta-analysis according to the methodology developed by the Cochrane Collaboration and the QUOROM statement based on randomized controlled trials (RCTs) comparing antidepressants with placebo. A systematic search was carried out in Medline (1966-April 2010), Embase and Cochrane library. The abstracts were revised to select the eligible publications. The references in selected published articles, reviews and meta-analyses were checked for potential new sources. Two outcome measures: opioid use, measured by positive urine controls, and improvement in depressive symptoms were analysed.

RESULTS

Seven RCTs were included. Antidepressants evaluated were: fluoxetine, sertraline, imipramine and doxepine. All studies were carried out in subjects under methadone maintenance treatment. Overall, there is only one study that supports the efficacy of imipramine in the treatment of comorbid diagnosis of depression in opioid users in methadone maintenance treatment. When reduction of illicit opioid use was the outcome of interest, a significant effect of Non-SSRI antidepressants was observed (OR: 3.65 [95% CI, 1.10-12.16]). (Figure 1).

CONCLUSIONS

Our data do not support the efficacy of antidepressants in the treatment of comorbid depression in opioid users in methadone maintenance treatment. More studies are needed.

REFERENCES

- Astals et al. *Subst Use Misuse* 2008;43:612-32.

Financial Support: Fondo de Investigación Sanitaria, Instituto Carlos III (ISCIII: GO3/184, 06/0001/1009).

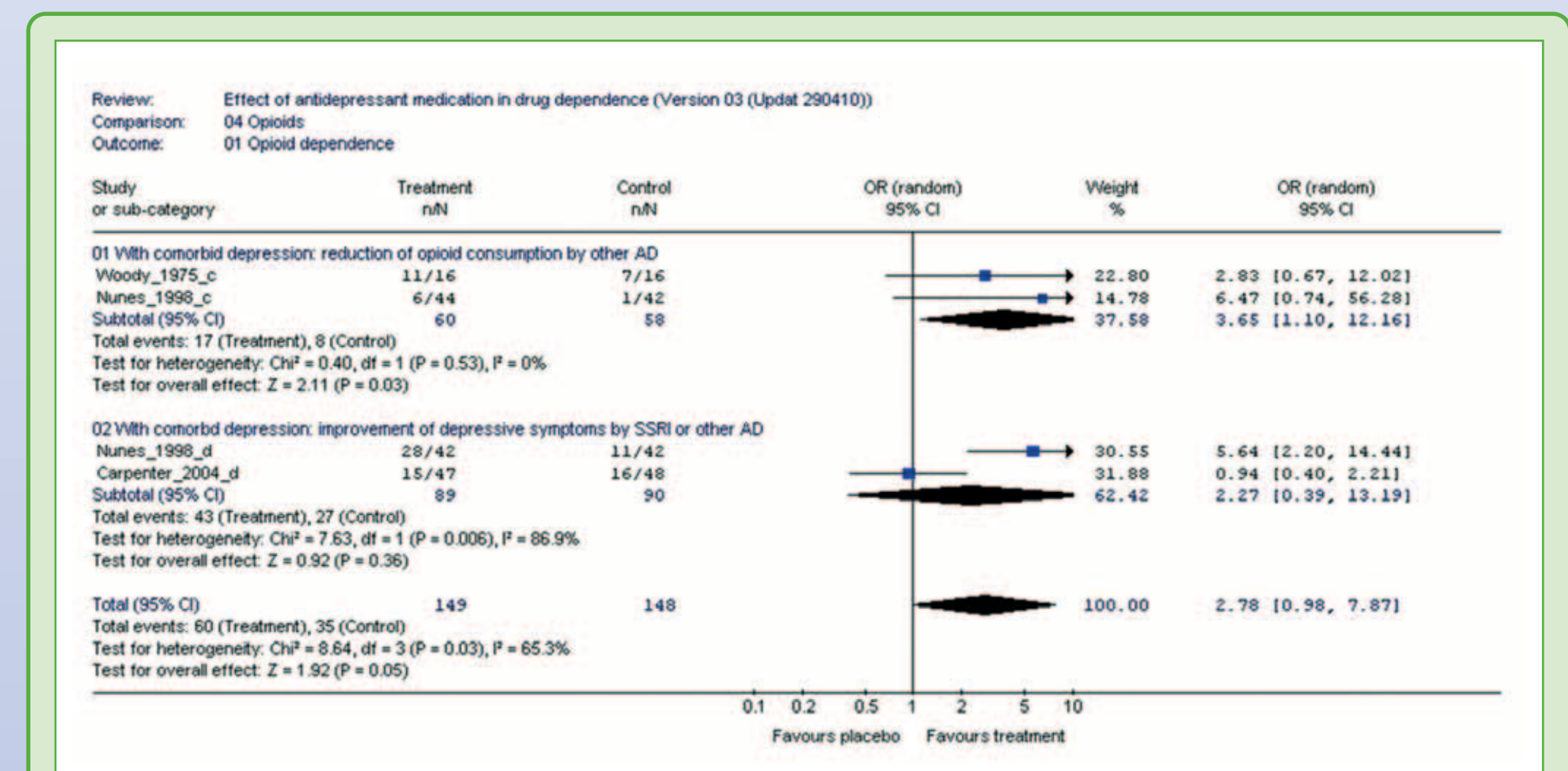


Figure 1. Effect of antidepressant medication in opioid dependence and depressive symptoms in patients with comorbid depression.

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