

Loading dose method in the treatment of delirium tremens with Diazepam

Summary

In the treatment of delirium tremens GABA-ergic medications are commonly recommended, since GABA neurons activity is suppressed in the alcohol withdrawal syndrome. The requirements are met by benzodiazepine derivatives and by Clometazol. More pronounced anticonvulsive action and small toxicity are the assets supporting the choice of benzodiazepines. However, results of treatment with Diazepam administered in divided doses have not been encouraging. An alternative to the traditional treatment applied so far is the loading dose method, consisting in the administration of 10 to 20 mg of Diazepam orally every 1 to 2 hours, until symptom relief is attained. In the study effectiveness of this method in comparison to other treatments was assessed. The experimental and control groups consisted of 51 and 45 patients, respectively. Severity of their delirium tremens symptoms was assessed using the CIWA-A scale. The total dose of Diazepam in the group under study ranged from 40 to 210 mg (with the mean dose of 87 mg). Controls received Diazepam and other psychotropic drugs in divided doses. The duration of delirium tremens in the experimental group ranged from 2 to 24 hours, and in controls from 2 to 123 hours, with the mean duration of 6,94 (SD±4,79) and 33,80 (SD±25,71) hours, respectively. The results indicate a considerable efficacy of this method, as the mean duration of the psychotic disorder was almost 5 times shorter in the target group. Providing that appropriate safety measures are used, the loading dose method seems to be safe; no significant complications have occurred in the course of treatment with this method.

Key words: delirium tremens, Diazepam, loading dose method

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Piśmiennictwo

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