Risperidone Added to Psychostimulant in Children with Severe Aggression and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Lack of Effect on Attention and Short-Term Memory


ABSTRACT

Objective: Professionals have periodically expressed concern that atypical antipsychotics may cause cognitive blunting in treated patients. In this study, we report data from a double-blind, randomized, controlled study of stimulant plus placebo versus combined stimulant and risperidone to evaluate the effects of the atypical antipsychotic on attention and short-term memory.

Methods: A total of 165 (n = 83 combined treatment; n = 82 stimulant plus placebo) children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and severe physical aggression, aged 6–12 years, were evaluated with Conners' Continuous Performance Test (CPT-II) and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III (WISC) Digit Span subscale at baseline, after 3 weeks of stimulant-only treatment, and after six additional weeks of randomized treatment (stimulant+placebo vs. stimulant+risperidone).

Results: At 3 weeks, improvement on CPT-II performance (Commissions and Reaction Time Standard Error; p < 0.001) and on Digit Span memory performance (p < 0.006) was noted for the full sample. At study week 9, no difference in CPT-II or Digit Span performance was observed between the randomized groups (ps = 0.41 to 0.83).

Conclusions: Similar to other studies, we found no deleterious effects on attention and short-term memory associated with short-term use of risperidone. NCT00796302.