

Double-Blind, Controlled, Crossover Trial of Inositol Versus Fluvoxamine for the Treatment of Panic Disorder

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Abstract

Only 70% of patients respond to current treatments for panic disorder, and many discontinue drugs because of side effects. *myo*-Inositol, a natural isomer of glucose and a precursor for the second-messenger phosphatidyl-inositol system, has previously been found superior to placebo in the treatment of depression, panic disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), but a direct comparison with an established drug has never been performed. A double-blind, controlled, random-order crossover study was undertaken to compare the effect of inositol with that of fluvoxamine in panic disorder. Twenty patients completed 1 month of inositol up to 18 g/day and 1 month of fluvoxamine up to 150 mg/day. Improvements on Hamilton Rating Scale for Anxiety scores, agoraphobia scores, and Clinical Global Impressions Scale scores were similar for both treatments. In the first month, inositol reduced the number of panic attacks per week (mean and SD) by 4.0 (2) compared with a reduction of 2.4 (2) with fluvoxamine ($p = 0.049$). Nausea and tiredness were more common with fluvoxamine ($p = 0.02$ and $p = 0.01$, respectively). Because inositol is a natural compound with few known side effects, it is attractive to patients who are ambivalent about taking psychiatric medication. Continuing reports of inositol's efficacy in the treatment of depression, panic disorder, and OCD should stimulate replication studies.