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[Randomized Controlled Trial](#) [J Am Med Dir Assoc.](#) 2017 Sep 1;18(9):799-802.

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Efficacy and Safety of Citalopram Compared to Atypical Antipsychotics on Agitation in Nursing Home Residents With Alzheimer Dementia

[Giovanni Viscogliosi](#)¹, [Iulia Maria Chiriac](#)², [Evaristo Ettorre](#)³

Affiliations

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Abstract

Objective: To assess efficacy and safety of citalopram compared to quetiapine and olanzapine for the treatment of agitation in patients with Alzheimer disease (AD).

Design: Longitudinal, 6-month study.

Setting: Nursing home (NH).

Participants: 75 NH residents with AD and agitation, randomized to citalopram (n = 25), quetiapine (n = 25), or olanzapine (n = 25).

Measurements: Changes in Neuropsychiatric Inventory (NPI) agitation subscale score and the modified Alzheimer Disease Cooperative Study-Clinical Global Impression of Change (mADCS-CGIC) were used to assess treatment efficacy. Participants were surveilled for adverse health outcomes.

Results: Citalopram treatment (30±5.8 mg/d) resulted in similar 6-month efficacy compared to both quetiapine (94.0±40.4 mg/d) and olanzapine (5.2±1.6 mg/d), lower occurrence of falls than olanzapine [odds ratio (OR) = 0.81, 95% confidence interval (CI) = 0.68-0.97, P = .012], lower incidence of orthostatic hypotension than both quetiapine (OR = 0.80, 95% CI = 0.66-0.95, P = .032) and olanzapine (OR = 0.75, 95% CI = 0.69-0.91, P = .02), and less all-cause hospitalizations than both quetiapine (OR = 0.92, 95% CI = 0.88-0.95, P = .016) and olanzapine (OR = 0.78, 95% CI = 0.64-0.92, P = .004), after multiple adjustment for potentially confounding variables. No differences were observed for cognitive and functional decline, QTc prolongation, and infections.

Conclusions: Citalopram resulted in similar efficacy and less adverse outcomes when compared to 2 atypical antipsychotics for treatment of agitation in NH residents with AD. Replication of these findings and assessment of long-term efficacy and safety of citalopram for treatment of neuropsychiatric symptoms in dementia are needed.

Keywords: Citalopram; agitation; atypical antipsychotics; dementia.

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