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LORAZEPAM, TIAPRIDE AND PREGABALIN IN ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL: A MULTICENTER, RANDOMISED, COMPARISON TRIAL

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Introduction: In this multicenter, randomised, single-blind, parallel group, comparison trial we aimed to investigate the efficacy of lorazepam, tiapride and pregabalin in alcohol withdrawal. Craving and psychiatric symptoms improvements were the secondary endpoints.

Methods: One-hundred-nine alcohol dependent subjects (DSM-IV) were detoxified and subsequently randomised into three groups, respectively receiving 200-400 mg of tiapride (TIA; mean dosage 300 mg), 2-5 mg of lorazepam (LOR; mean dosage 3 mg) and 150-450 mg of pregabalin (PRE; mean dosage 280 mg). Withdrawal symptomatology was determined by the Clinical Institute Withdrawal Assessment for Alcohol (CIWA-Ar), whereas the level of craving for alcohol was evaluated by a 10-cm Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and the Italian -version of the Obsessive and Compulsive Drinking Scale (OCDS). Psychiatric symptomatology was evaluated by the Symptom Check List 90 Revised (SCL-90 R).

Results: All the three medications have shown efficacy on reducing alcohol drinking indices, craving scores and withdrawal symptomatology. The reduction observed in the PRE group was significantly higher than those in the LOR and TIA groups. In terms of safety and tolerability, all the compounds were generally well-tolerated. Only one patient has reported an epileptic episode during the treatment with tiapride.

Discussion: Results from this study globally place the three medications at the same range of efficacy, with the PRE group reporting an higher reduction of withdrawal symptoms. Another point in favour of the employment of pregabalin was represented by a better outcome in those patients reporting a comorbid psychiatric disorder.