

PW01-05 - COMPARATIVE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEWER ANTIDEPRESSANTS ON DRIVING ABILITY AND THE IMPACT OF RETEST-EFFECTS

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Objectives: Although the therapeutic efficacy of newer antidepressants has been demonstrated in various studies there is only little research available about patients fitness to drive under newer antidepressants.

Methods: A sample of 60 depressive inpatients diagnosed according to DSM-IV criteria were randomly assigned to treatment with either mirtazapine (n=20), escitalopram (n=20) or reboxetine (n=20). To control for retest effects 15 healthy controls were examined in the same time schedule. Participants were tested before pharmacologic treatment (t_0), and on days 7 (t_1) and 14 (t_2) with computerized tests related to car driving skills. Data were collected with the Act and React Testsystem (ART 90) and the Wiener-Testsystem (WTS) measuring visual perception, reactivity, stress tolerance, concentration and vigilance.

Results: Patients showed significant improvements in most functional domains related to driving ability skills after 14 days of treatment with newer antidepressants. Statistically significant differences between treatment groups could not be shown. However, controlling for retest-effects only in vigilance-measures significant group by time effects could be found indicating an improvement over practice effects.

Conclusions: Partly remitted depressive patients treated with mirtazapine, escitalopram or reboxetine showed a better test performance in driving related skills than untreated patients. However, as most of these laboratory driving tests have a large speed component, retest effects have to be considered when interpreting results of repeated examinations.