

Pharmacological Options for the Treatment of Tourette’s Disorder

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Contents

Abstract 2207
1. Clinical Features, Genetics and Neurochemistry 2208
2. Principles of Pharmacological Treatment 2209
3. Antidopaminergic Therapy 2211
3.1 Haloperidol 2211
3.2 Pimozide 2211
3.3 Atypical Antipsychotic Drugs 2211
3.4 Other Antidopaminergic Drugs 2211
4. Clonidine 2211
5. Alternative Agents for the Therapy of Tics 2212
5.1 Benzodiazepines 2212
5.2 Calcium Channel Antagonists 2212
5.3 Botulinum Toxin 2212
5.4 Dopamine Agonists 2213
5.5 Selegiline 2213
5.6 Other Drugs 2213
6. Treatment of Conductual Disorders 2214
6.1. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder 2214
6.1.1. Clomipramine 2214
6.1.2 Selective Serotonin-Reuptake Inhibitors 2214
6.1.3 Other Drugs 2214
6.2 Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder 2214
6.2.1 Psychostimulants 2214
6.2.2 Other Drugs 2215
7. Nonpharmacological Therapies 2215
8. Conclusion 2215

Abstract

Tourette’s disorder is a neuropsychiatric disorder characterised clinically by motor and vocal tics, which may be associated to conductual disorders such as obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Although the neurochemistry of Tourette’s disorder is not well known, there are some effective therapies for tics, OCD and ADHD. However, these are not devoid of adverse effects.
Tics only require treatment when they interfere with the functioning of the

patient. If therapy is needed, monotherapy at the minimal effective dose is desirable, but some patients may require two or more drugs. The most frequently used drugs for tics are antipsychotics (mainly pimozide and haloperidol) and clonidine. The potential usefulness of atypical antipsychotic drugs (risperidone, olanzapine, clozapine, ziprasidone) and other dopaminergic drugs (fluphenazine, sulpiride, tiapride, metoclopramide, piquindone, tetrabenazine), clonazepam, calcium channel antagonists, botulinum toxin, dopamine agonists, selegiline, and other drugs is discussed.

The drugs of choice for OCD in patients with Tourette's disorder are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), although the tricyclic antidepressant clomipramine, which inhibits both serotonin and noradrenaline uptake, has also been found to be useful.

ADHD can be treated with some psychostimulants, mainly methylphenidate, although these drugs must be used with caution. Other potentially useful drugs for the treatment of ADHD in patients with Tourette's disorder are clonidine, guanfacine, selegiline, some tricyclic antidepressants, sertraline, pimozide and clonazepam.

Finally, the potential value of some nonpharmacological therapies (hypnotherapy, biofeedback, conductual therapies, electroconvulsive therapy, acupuncture and surgery) is briefly reviewed.

Although the treatment of the Tourette's disorder has evolved from case reports to blinded trials, most of the classical pharmacological therapies for tics have limited effectiveness and poor adverse effect profiles. In recent years some new effective and better-tolerated drugs have been developed. As well as treatment of tic symptoms, comorbid illnesses must be treated when they cause functional impairment. In this article, we attempt to discuss both established and potential future drug treatments for patients with Tourette's disorder, both for tics and for associated behavioural problems.

1. Clinical Features, Genetics and Neurochemistry

Tourette's disorder is a neuropsychiatric disorder of genetic origin, which is characterised clinically by the presence of motor and vocal tics. It is frequently associated with conductual disorders, mainly obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).^[1-5] Diagnostic criteria for tic disorders have been well defined by the Tourette Syndrome Classification Study Group^[6] and in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disor-

ders (DSM-IV).^[7] Tics are present in all patients with Tourette's syndrome, and are the initial symptom of the disease in 71% of patients.^[8] Both motor and vocal tics have a typical waxing and waning course. The reported frequencies of OCD and ADHD in patients with Tourette disorder range from 32 to 50% and 32 to 63%, respectively.^[5,9]

Some studies have shown that Tourette's disorder is inherited by autosomal dominant transmission, with a penetrance of 0.88 to 1.00 in males and 0.45 to 0.98 in females,^[10-15] and variable expression that includes the presence of complete Tourette disorder, chronic and transient tics, OCD and ADHD.^[16,17] Bilineal transmission, suggesting a role for homozygosity or polygenic influences,^[18-21] and a mixed model of inheritance with a major locus of genetic susceptibility and a multifactorial base have also been suggested.^[22] However, the results of linkage analyses of some candidate genes have been unsuccessful in finding the genetic defect.

Although the neurochemistry of Tourette's disorder not well known, the therapeutic effect of antidopaminergic agents and clonidine on tics imply the involvement dopaminergic (dopamine hyperactivity) and noradrenergic mechanisms (nor-

Table I. Neurochemical findings in Tourettes syndrome (original table elaborated with data from the text of reference^[5])

Neurotransmitter	Examination	Findings
Dopamine	Brain (postmortem)	Increased dopamine uptake sites in the striatum (³ H-mazindol) Normal levels of dopamine, DOPAC and HVA in some subcortical regions and of dopamine in the basal ganglia
	CSF	HVA levels decreased, normal or increased
	Brain (PET/SPECT)	Presynaptic dopamine uptake sites in the striatum increased (¹²³ I-beta-CIT SPECT) Postsynaptic D ₂ dopamine receptors increased (¹¹ C-N-methyl-spiperone) or normal (¹¹ C-raclopride) Dopamine presynaptic terminals normal (¹¹ F-Dopa)
	Platelets	Decreased dopamine uptake into platelet storage granules
Noradrenaline	Brain (postmortem)	Normal NA levels and β-adrenergic receptors densities in some cortical regions and basal ganglia
	CSF	Normal MHPG levels
	Plasma	Decreased or normal plasma MHPG levels
	Urine	Decreased urine excretion of MHPG and normethanephrine.
Serotonin	Brain (postmortem)	Normal 5-HIAA levels in some cortical areas and decreased 5-HIAA levels in some subcortical areas
	CSF	Normal or decreased CSF 5-HIAA levels
	Plasma	Normal or decreased 5-HT and tryptophan levels
	Urine	Urine excretion of 5-HT and 5-HIAA decreased or normal (but increased in patients with associated OCD)
Acetylcholine	Platelets	Decreased 5-HT receptors (³ H-imiprimine and ³ H-paroxetine)
	Brain (postmortem)	Normal choline-acetyl-transferase activity and muscarinic receptors in some cortical areas
	CSF	Normal acetyl-cholinesterase and butyryl-cholinesterase activities
	Lymphocytes	Decreased density of muscarinic receptors
GABA	Erythrocytes	Increased choline levels in patients and first-degree relatives
	Brain (postmortem)	Normal GAD activity
	CSF	Normal
	Plasma	Normal
Other	Brain (postmortem)	Decreased dynorphine A[1-17] in the striatum and globus pallidus
	CSF	Increased dynorphine A[1-8] and CRF levels, normal arginine-vasopressin and oxytocin
	Brain (PET)	Normal density of opioid receptors (¹¹ C-diprenorphyne)

5-HIAA = 5-hydroxyindolacetic acid; **5-HT** = 5-hydroxytryptamine (serotonin); **DOPAC** = dihydroxyphenylacetic acid; **CRF** = corticotropin releasing factor; **CSF** = cerebrospinal fluid; **GABA** = γ-aminobutyric acid; **GAD** = glutamic acid decarboxylase; **HVA** = homovanillic acid; **MHPG** = 3-methoxy-4-hydroxyphenylenglicol; **NA** = noradrenaline; **OCD** = obsessive-compulsive disorder; **PET** = positron emission tomography; **SPECT** = single photon emission computed tomography.

adrenergic hyperactivity). On the basis of the response of patients with tics to other drugs, it is likely that other neurotransmitters such as serotonin (5-hydroxytryptamine; 5-HT), acetylcholine, γ-aminobutyric acid (GABA), and opioids are also implicated. The main neurochemical findings in patients with Tourette’s disorder are summarised in table I.^[5]

2. Principles of Pharmacological Treatment

The main objective of the therapy of Tourette’s disorder is to obtain adequate control of symptoms,

both the motor and/or vocal tics and the associated conductual disorders.

Tics only require treatment when they cause interference with psychosocial, educational and occupational functioning of the patient. Because of the waxing and waning course of tics, it is possible to taper the treatment in individual patients. At present, standard medication for tics includes antipsychotics (and other antidopaminergic drugs) and clonidine. Although these drugs have been proved to be effective, frequent adverse effects, especially sedation and learning problems (not to mention extrapyramidal adverse effects) stimulated the search

for new drugs, with inconsistent results. At present many other drugs have been investigated for the control of tics. The list includes various anticonvulsants, antidepressants, calcium channel antagonists, cholinergic agents, lithium and opiate antagonists among other drugs.^[23,24] If therapy is needed, monotherapy at the minimal effective dose

is desirable, but some patients may require two or more drugs.

The drugs of choice for OCD are the selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). Psychostimulants are useful for the treatment of ADHD but their generalised use is not recommended. Table II summarises the most important drugs (in-

Table II. Drugs used for the therapy of Tourette's syndrome

Drug	Recommended dosages (mg/day)	Main adverse effects
Antidopaminergic agents		
Haloperidol	0.25-8	Dystonic reactions, parkinsonism, akathisia, tardive dyskinesia, sedation, intellectual impairment, dysphoria, depression, social and school phobias, bulimia and bodyweight gain
Pimozide	0.5-10	Possible prolongation of QT-interval on ECG, other similar to those of haloperidol (but much less frequent)
Risperidone	0.5-3	Anxiety, insomnia, headache. Less frequently sedation, gynaecomastia, hyperprolactinaemia-amenorrhoea-galactorrhoea and extrapyramidal symptoms
Olanzapine	2.5-10	Somnolence, weight gain, dizziness, orthostatic hypotension, oedema. Less frequently extrapyramidal symptoms, gynaecomastia, hyperprolactinaemia, gastrointestinal complaints, hypotension, tachycardia
Fluphenazine	0.5-15	Similar to those of haloperidol, but lower frequency of sedative effect, bodyweight gain and school phobia
Sulpiride	100-400	Extrapyramidal symptoms much less frequently than haloperidol, bodyweight gain, hyperprolactinaemia-amenorrhoea-galactorrhoea
Tiapride	50-300	Sedation, other similar to those of sulpiride
Tetrabenazine	12.5-100	Parkinsonism, depression, anxiety, sedation, insomnia, akathisia
Clonidine	0.075-0.30	Sedation, hypotension, irritability, dizziness, headache, insomnia, dry mouth, cutaneous exanthema (transdermic patches)
Benzodiazepines		
Clonazepam	0.25-5	Sedation, dizziness, ataxia
Calcium channel antagonists		
Nicardipine	40-100	Dizziness, nausea, constipation, facial flushing, oedema, headache
Flunarizine	10-20	Similar to those of nicardipine, drowsiness, bodyweight gain, parkinsonism, tardive dyskinesia, depression
Dopamine agonists		
Pergolide	0-125-0.25	Nausea, vomiting
Selegiline	5-10	Hypotension, nausea, vomiting, insomnia, confusion
Clomipramine	25-250	Anticholinergic adverse effects (dry mouth, constipation, blurred vision, sedation, etc), cardiotoxicity, tremor
SSRIs		
Fluoxetine	10-100	Gastrointestinal symptoms, anxiety, insomnia, tremor, dizziness, headache
Fluvoxamine	25-300	
Citalopram	10-40	
Sertraline	25-200	
Paroxetine	10-60	
Psychostimulants		
Methylphenidate	2.5-30	Insomnia, dry mouth, nausea and other gastrointestinal complaints, anxiety, exanthema, hyper- or hypotension, palpitations
Dextroamphetamine	5-30	

ECG = electrocardiogram; SSRIs = selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors.

cluding recommended dosages and adverse effects) used in the treatment of patients with Tourette's disorder.

3. Antidopaminergic Therapy

3.1 Haloperidol

Haloperidol is a butyrophenone antipsychotic drug that binds more specifically to postsynaptic dopamine D₂ than to D₁ receptors. It also has some α_1 -adrenergic antagonistic activity.^[25] This drug was first used for Tourette's syndrome in 1961, and was the drug of choice during the 1960s and 1970s, with an efficacy of 60 to 90%.^[26-36] Some patients with refractory disease benefit from the use of haloperidol decanoate.^[37] However, the high frequency of adverse effects in many instances led to the discontinuation of therapy.^[38-40] The main adverse effects that lead to haloperidol discontinuation include dysphoric reactions, akathisia, nervousness, sedation, dystonic reactions, and cognitive dulling/feeling drugged.^[40] Taking these considerations into account, haloperidol should not currently be considered the first-line agent in children as other agents have superior adverse-effect profiles.^[41]

3.2 Pimozide

Pimozide is a diphenylpiperidine. Like haloperidol it preferentially binds to D₂ receptors, but has little effect on adrenergic receptors.^[25] Pimozide was introduced for the treatment of Tourette's syndrome in 1978.^[42] Its efficacy in controlling tics is comparable to that of haloperidol, but in most studies pimozide has a significantly lower incidence of adverse effects.^[43-49]

In some patients, long-term use of pimozide can induce sedation, bodyweight gain, depression, pseudoparkinsonism and akathisia. Because prolongation of the QT-interval has been reported in some studies, it is recommended to avoid the use of this drug if the QT-interval is abnormal on the initial electrocardiogram.^[50] When compared with haloperidol, pimozide has better effects on cognition.^[51] A recent study showed that long-term treat-

ment with pimozide was more effective in controlling the course of tics than using the drug to treat acute exacerbations.^[52]

3.3 Atypical Antipsychotic Drugs

Although the current experience with atypical antipsychotic drugs is limited to case reports or short-term studies, they are considered as promising agents for the control of tics because they have better adverse effect profiles than haloperidol. Risperidone, a potent 5-HT_{2A}, D₂ and α_1 -adrenergic receptor antagonist, has shown efficacy in short-term studies in controlling tics and OCD disorders.^[53-58] Olanzapine is another atypical antipsychotic drug with high antagonistic affinity to the D₂, D₄, 5-HT_{2A}, 5-HT_{2C} and α_1 -adrenergic receptors. Olanzapine has shown efficacy in the control of tics.^[59-61] The experience with clozapine has been limited but unsatisfactory.^[62,63] Recently, Sallee et al.^[64] reported efficacy with ziprasidone in controlling tics.

3.4 Other Antidopaminergic Drugs

Two studies have shown that the piperazine phenothiazine fluphenazine has a similar efficacy to haloperidol in controlling tics but with fewer adverse effects.^[65,66] The efficacy of the orthopramides or substituted benzamides sulpiride,^[67-69] tiapride,^[70] and metoclopramide,^[71] and piquindone has been reported.^[72] These drugs are selective D₂ receptor antagonists.

Tetrabenazine is a benzoquinoline derivative that depletes presynaptic storage of dopamine and has a mild blocking effect on D₂ receptors. Some studies involving a small number of patients have shown efficacy with tetrabenazine on tics.^[73-76] Adverse effects include drowsiness, depression and parkinsonism.

4. Clonidine

Clonidine is an imidazole derivative that acts as α_2 -adrenergic agonist, inhibiting the release of noradrenaline. This drug was introduced for the treatment of Tourette's disorder in 1979.^[77] It has

a gradual onset of action, and ameliorates motor and vocal tics, compulsive behaviour and attentional problems. Clonidine has been shown to be useful both by oral^[39,65,77-83] and transdermal routes of administration.^[84] Although a double-blind study failed to show improvement of tics with clonidine,^[85] the abrupt withdrawal of this drug can induce a rebound phenomenon with marked worsening of tics.^[86]

It has been recently reported that another α_2 -adrenergic agonist, guanfacine, may be useful in the treatment of motor and vocal tics and ADHD.^[87]

5. Alternative Agents for the Therapy of Tics

5.1 Benzodiazepines

Clonazepam is, at present, the only benzodiazepine commonly used to treat tics. It is surprising, since the use of clonazepam in tics is supported only by a few reports, none of which were carried out with double-blind design.^[39,88-90] In spite of these caveats, some experts recommend clonazepam as a second-line treatment after antipsychotics and clonidine.^[91] Interestingly enough, clonazepam may induce Tourette's like disorder in exceptional cases.^[92]

The putative mechanism of action clonazepam on tics is complex. Apart from the well-known effect on the GABA_A receptor complex,^[93] this drug also interacts with serotonin neurotransmission.^[93-95] In addition, clonazepam exhibits antidopaminergic properties in experimental models.^[96,97] Several of these mechanisms could explain the antidyskinetic action of clonazepam.

5.2 Calcium Channel Antagonists

In 1984, Goldstein reported the anecdotal use of nifedipine in a patient with Tourette's syndrome.^[98] It is of note that in this first report, nifedipine was chosen on the assumption that decreasing calcium current would result in decreased neurotransmitter release. Since then, several reports suggested that calcium channel antagonists might be useful as therapy for tics;^[99-101] however,

most of these reports included anecdotal cases or short series.

The most convincing study in support of the use of calcium channel antagonists was performed by Micheli et al.^[102] These researchers carried out a placebo-controlled study in seven patients with Tourette's syndrome. Flunarizine was used at a starting dose of 5mg which was increased until response was achieved or adverse effects appeared. There was a statistical response in terms of reduction in motor and phonic tics; however, adverse effects included bradykinesia in two patients. Calcium channel antagonists appear to be promising drugs for use in patients with tics, but the efficacy of these drugs still awaits confirmation by properly design trials.

The mechanism of action of calcium channel antagonists in controlling tics is not well known. Clinical and experimental studies have demonstrated that they exhibit antidopaminergic properties,^[103-109] but the exact mechanism of this antidopaminergic activity is not fully understood because these drugs exhibit a complex action on dopaminergic system. Calcium channel antagonists, mainly flunarizine and cinnarizine, act at postsynaptic level by blocking D₂ receptors.^[110] In addition, they can act at presynaptic level, decreasing the synthesis and release of catecholamines in experimental models.^[111,112] Current information suggest that phenylalkylamines and diphenylalkylamines have a predominant postsynaptic neuroleptic-like action, whereas dihydropyridines have a predominant presynaptic effect on dopamine neurotransmission. This mechanism might explain the antidyskinetic effect of calcium channel antagonists.^[109,112]

5.3 Botulinum Toxin

Botulinum toxin has been used with increasing frequency over the last decade to treat disorders characterised by inappropriate muscle contraction including focal dystonia and spasticity.^[113-117] Therefore, it was only a matter of time before the effectiveness of botulinum toxin on tics was explored in patients with Tourette's syndrome.

Jankovic reported a pilot study involving ten patients,^[118] his results were encouraging and were followed by two larger nonblind studies.^[119,120] However double-blind, placebo-controlled studies are needed to confirm these findings. If the results of Jankovic are confirmed, botulinum toxin may be a very reasonable option for the treatment of tics. Interestingly, botulinum toxin seems to improve not only the pure motor tic, but also the sensory manifestation^[118] that often accompanies the motor phenomena (premonitory sensory component). The effectiveness of injections of botulinum toxin into vocal cord for the treatment of severe vocal tics has also been reported.^[121-123]

5.4 Dopamine Agonists

Since dopamine antagonists are, at present, the gold standard for the treatment of tics, the use of dopamine agonists seems to be an oddity. However, apomorphine^[124] and pergolide^[125] have been employed in the treatment of tics with positive results. The initial nonblind study with pergolide has been followed up with a double-blind, placebo-controlled study^[126] that confirmed the efficacy of pergolide. In contrast, a double-blind trial with talipexole failed to show any efficacy.^[127] The mechanism of action of pergolide in controlling tics is partially unknown, although it is likely to be related to modulation of presynaptic dopamine receptors; therefore, the net effect should be an inhibitory dopaminergic effect.^[127] Of note, is the very low dose of pergolide used in the treatment of tics (<300µg), which contrasts with much larger doses used in Parkinson's disease (3mg). Dopamine agonists at low doses represent a new, interesting approach for the treatment of tics. An improvement in tics in a patient treated with the partial D₂ agonist and 5-HT_{1A} agonist buspirone has been also described.^[128]

5.5 Selegiline

Selegiline has been used in patients with Tourette's syndrome and ADHD.^[129] Unexpectedly, selegiline not only improved ADHD, but also had a beneficial effect on tics.^[130] Because of its

generally good tolerance and lack of serious adverse effects, further investigation of selegiline for this use is warranted.

5.6 Other Drugs

Awaad^[119] conducted a nonblind study involving 264 patients with the GABA agonist baclofen 10 to 80 mg/day, and reported significant improvement of motor and vocal tics.

The use of some serotonin antagonists, such as the selective 5-HT₃ antagonist ondansetron^[131] and the 5-HT₂ antagonist ketanserin (this drug is also a potent α_1 -adrenergic agonist and a weak dopamine receptor antagonist)^[132] has been reported as beneficial in controlling tics in nonblind studies involving a small number of patients. The selective 5-HT_{2C} agonist chlorophenylpiperazine (mCPP) did not show any effect on tics in a double-blind placebo-controlled study.^[133]

Nicotine, used by both oral (chewing gum)^[134-136] or transdermal routes of administration^[137-140] has been shown to improve tics, especially by potentiation of the action of antipsychotics such as haloperidol. Interestingly, the nicotine antagonist mecamylamine also improved tics in a nonblind study involving 13 patients.^[141] The author speculated with the possibility that nicotine could induce a prolonged inactivation of one or more acetylcholinergic nicotinic-receptor subtypes producing an antagonist effect. The clinical response to cholinergic agents (precursors of acetylcholine such as choline or lecithin or acetylcholinesterase inhibitors such as physostigmine) are controversial,^[142-147] and their clinical usefulness should be limited.

Some case studies suggested that the modulation of the opioid system could improve tics. In support of this hypothesis, improvement of tics with the opioid antagonists naloxone^[148] and naltrexone,^[149,150] and with the opioid partial agonists methadone^[151] and tramadol, has been described.^[152] On the other hand, some authors reported worsening of tics with naloxone.^[153]

On the basis of previous reports of improvement of tics with marihuana,^[154,155] Müller-Vahl et al.^[156,157] suggested the possible role of can-

nabinoids in the pathophysiology and therapy of Tourette's syndrome. These authors, using an structured interview, questioned a large group of patients with Tourette's syndrome about the use of nicotine, alcohol and marihuana, and their subjective experiences with these substances. Among patients drinking alcohol, 69% reported improvement of tics after alcohol consumption, and from those patients using marihuana, 85% noted marked improvement of tics. Thereafter, they report improvement in a single patient with delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol 10mg.^[158]

Preliminary experiences suggested the possible usefulness of antiandrogen or estrogenic therapy in Tourette's syndrome.^[159-161] In addition, a worsening of tics with androgen therapy has been reported.^[162] More recently, Peterson et al.^[163] reported improvement in motor, but not in vocal tics, in a double-blind, placebo-controlled study using flutamide involving 13 patients with Tourette's syndrome. In addition, a modest effect on OCD symptoms was noted. These findings suggest a promising role of antiandrogen therapy in the treatment of tics.

Anecdotal reports suggest a beneficial effect of vigabatrine,^[25] lamotrigine^[25] and lithium.^[164,165] On the other hand, induction of tics or touretism by lamotrigine has also been reported.^[166,167] Some authors have suggested the possibility of a good therapeutic effect of some corticotropin releasing factor antagonists under development.^[168]

Muller et al.^[169] reported a good response with intravenous immunoglobulins in patients with Tourette's disorder. Perlmutter et al.^[170] conducted a randomised, controlled trial with intravenous immunoglobulins and plasma exchange in 30 patients with infection-triggered exacerbations of OCD or tic disorders, and found improvement of OCD symptoms with both therapeutic approaches and also of tics with plasma exchange.

6. Treatment of Conductual Disorders

The behavioural disorders associated with Tourette's syndrome, mainly OCD and ADHD, are not usually improved to the same degree as tics by antipsychotics or clonidine alone or in combina-

tion. The development of SSRIs has been very useful in the treatment of OCD, whereas ADHD is usually treated with psychostimulants.

6.1. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

6.1.1. Clomipramine

Clomipramine is a tricyclic antidepressant that inhibits both serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake. This drug has been found to be useful in the treatment of patients with OCD.^[171] Although some reports suggested improvement of OCD and tics in patients with Tourette's syndrome,^[172] others have reported no improvement.^[173] Moreover, the induction of tics related to clomipramine has been reported.^[174] As with other tricyclic antidepressants, clomipramine may induce sedation, dry mouth, constipation and cardiotoxic effects.

6.1.2 Selective Serotonin-Reuptake Inhibitors

Nowadays, SSRIs are the therapy of choice for patients with OCD. A beneficial effect on OCD associated with Tourette's syndrome has been reported with fluoxetine,^[175-180] fluvoxamine^[181,182] and citalopram.^[182] Interestingly, fluvoxamine seems to be less effective in improving OCD symptoms in patients without tics than in those with tics.^[181] Although worsening of tics has been reported in some patients receiving SSRIs such as paroxetine,^[183] sertraline^[184] or fluvoxamine,^[185] there was no worsening of tics in patients receiving fluoxetine in a double-blind study.^[180]

Finally, in some patients with Tourette's syndrome and OCD refractory to fluvoxamine treatment, the addition of pimozide or haloperidol was useful in reducing OCD symptoms.^[186,187]

6.1.3 Other Drugs

Some degree of improvement of OCD has been reported with the use of risperidone,^[55] clonidine,^[82] naloxone,^[188] and naltrexone.^[189]

6.2 Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

6.2.1 Psychostimulants

Psychostimulants such as dextroamphetamine, methylphenidate or pemoline are likely the most

effective drugs for ADHD associated with Tourette's syndrome. Although initial reports suggested that psychostimulants might induce or exacerbate tics,^[190-198] some single- or double-blind, placebo-controlled studies have shown that low doses of stimulants can improve ADHD symptoms without significant exacerbation of tics.^[199-205] However, 25 to 30% of patients do not improve with these drugs and their long-term adverse effects are not well known.^[206] For these reasons, long-term use of psychostimulants is not recommended, and their use in patients with Tourette's disorder should be undertaken with caution.

6.2.2 Other Drugs

An improvement of ADHD in patients with Tourette's syndrome has been reported with clonidine,^[78,83,207,208] guanfacine,^[87] selegiline (deprenyl),^[129,130] desipramine,^[208,209] imipramine,^[210] nortriptyline,^[211] sertraline,^[212] pimozide,^[51] and clonazepam.^[90]

7. Nonpharmacological Therapies

Nonpharmacological therapies use in the treatment of patients with Tourette's syndrome, which have reported to produce an improvement include hypnotherapy,^[213] biofeedback,^[214] conductual therapies^[215,216] including relaxation therapy,^[217,218,219] sequential application of major habit-reversal components,^[215,219] self-monitoring,^[215] differential reinforcement,^[220] competing responses,^[221] and electroconvulsive therapy.^[222,223] Wu et al.^[224] reported a 92.3% of effective rate in patients who received acupuncture treatment, with higher cure rates in children aged 11 to 15 years than in children aged 6 to 10 years.

Surgery for Tourette's disorder must be considered as experimental, because the experience is limited and the possible risk/benefit ratio is not well-known.^[225] The possibility of severe sequelae must be kept in mind.^[226] Prefrontal leucotomy or cingulotomy could be indicated in patients with severe OCD,^[227,228] although the initial improvement is not maintained in some patients.^[229] Recently, Vandewalle et al.^[230] have shown a marked improvement of tics in a patient with high fre-

quency stimulation of nucleus ventral oralis of the thalamus internus. Indeed, this could be an interesting approach for patients with severe Tourette's syndrome refractory to medical therapy.

8. Conclusion

Current pharmacotherapy for Tourette's disorder is not completely satisfactory, because the efficacy is limited and adverse effects are not infrequent, especially in children. When therapy is needed because there is functional impairment, it seems reasonable to use those drugs with the least adverse effects at the lowest doses possible. Among antipsychotics, the best established and tolerated is pimozide. Clonidine is also useful both for the treatment of tics and ADHD. Although the experience with atypical antipsychotics is limited, some recent studies suggested a good effect in the control of tics and better tolerability than that of classical antipsychotics. SSRIs are the treatment of choice of OCD and, although methylphenidate and other psychostimulants can improve ADHD, these drugs are not generally recommended. The potential usefulness of other promising drugs for the treatment of Tourette's syndrome awaits confirmation.

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