

*For medical correspondents only*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Location: 1st International Forum on Mood and Anxiety Disorders, Monte Carlo

### **Seroquel: New evidence suggests moderate to marked improvement in over 75 % of patients with bipolar disorder**

Data presented today at the First International Forum on Mood and Anxiety Disorders in Monte Carlo indicates that the atypical antipsychotic Seroquel (quetiapine), which is already widely prescribed for the treatment of schizophrenia, may also offer benefits in the treatment of psychotic mood disorders when used in conjunction with mood stabilising medication.

In a retrospective analysis, Associate Professor Carlos Zarate of the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre, US, reviewed the medical records of 145 patients diagnosed with psychotic mood disorders who were being treated with Seroquel.

Response to Seroquel was assessed according to a four-point scale: 0 = no response, 1 = minimal improvement, 2 = moderate improvement with significant but incomplete reduction in symptoms and 3 = marked improvement, with virtual or complete remission of symptoms allowing return to premorbid social or vocational functioning.

The majority of the 145 patients achieved a moderate to marked improvement with Seroquel (76% of males and 70% of females), and levels of improvement were even more pronounced in those with bipolar disorders: 86% in schizoaffective disorder, bipolar type, 84% in bipolar disorder, manic, 80% in bipolar disorder, depressed, and 77% in bipolar disorder, mixed. This is particularly impressive given the severity, chronicity and treatment-refractory nature of some of these illnesses.

These results were further supported by Dr Martha Sajatovic of Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, US, who presented data demonstrating that Seroquel showed a significantly greater overall improvement in depressive symptoms than risperidone in patients with mood disorders.<sup>1</sup> This sub-analysis of a larger study known as QUEST, involved 419 patients with primary mood disorders with psychotic features (e.g. major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder) of which 103 were diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Patients were randomised in a 3:1 ratio to Seroquel and risperidone and were flexibly dosed. Primary assessment was the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D) at weeks 0, 8 and 16.

Both Seroquel and risperidone produced improvements in HAM-D scores, but Seroquel produced a significantly greater improvement (-50.4% of baseline) than risperidone (-33.2% of baseline) ( $p = 0.0956$ ) in patients with bipolar disorder. Importantly, the improvements in Seroquel-treated patients were significantly greater for those considered most depressed at the start of the study i.e. with high baseline HAMD scores ( $\geq 20$ ) (-46.7% vs. -34.0% for risperidone,  $p = 0.005$ ).

“Seroquel, already established as an effective treatment of schizophrenia with an unrivalled tolerability profile, may provide a valuable treatment option for people suffering from depressive symptoms of bipolar disorder.” commented Dr Sajatovic. “This is particularly encouraging as over the course of the illness, nearly

one out of five individuals with bipolar disorder will commit suicide, making it among the most lethal psychiatric illnesses.<sup>2</sup> By relieving depression and negative symptoms, Seroquel may even help to reduce suicidal feelings and attempts.”

Three phase III clinical trials to determine the effectiveness of Seroquel in the treatment of acute mania in patients with bipolar 1 disorder have recently commenced, with a fourth due to start in 2001.

Seroquel (quetiapine) is manufactured by AstraZeneca and is currently approved in over 65 markets. Seroquel combines broad-based efficacy in the treatment of positive, negative, cognitive and affective symptoms of schizophrenia with an unrivalled tolerability profile. Seroquel is associated with an incidence of EPS and prolactin elevation comparable to placebo even at highest recommended doses, a neutral effect on weight in long-term treatment, and no clinically significant changes on electrocardiograms. This combination sets Seroquel apart from other atypical antipsychotic agents, making it a first line, first-choice treatment for psychoses. To date, over 600,000 people have been treated with Seroquel world-wide.

AstraZeneca plc is a world-leading pharmaceutical business engaged in the research, development, manufacture and marketing of ethical (prescription) pharmaceuticals. It is one of the top five pharmaceutical companies in the world with leading positions in sales of gastrointestinal, oncology, anaesthesia including pain management, cardiovascular, central nervous system (CNS) and respiratory products. AstraZeneca is dedicated to providing innovative medicines for the treatment of diseases of the central nervous system (CNS) where there is a high unmet medical need. The company already markets drugs for the treatment of migraine (Zomig®) and schizophrenia (Seroquel®), and has an industry-leading R&D pipeline of several novel pharmacological approaches for the treatment of acute stroke, depression and anxiety and other key disease areas.

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Or, for an electronic version of this press release, please visit the online schizophrenia resource on URL: [www. psychiatry-in-practice.com](http://www.psychiatry-in-practice.com)

**References:**

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<sup>1</sup> Mullen J, Sajatovic M, Sweitzer D: Efficacy of quetiapine and risperidone against depressive symptoms in outpatients with psychotic disorders. Poster presented at First International Forum on Mood and Anxiety Disorders, Monte-Carlo, November 2000

<sup>2</sup> Sachs GS, Printz DJ, Kahn DA, Carpenter D, Docherty JP. The expert consensus guideline series: medication treatment of bipolar disorder 2000. Postgrad Med Special Report. 2000 (April): 1-104