ANNOUNCEMENTS

Erratum

Page 216, 3rd paragraph, line 4: It should read “cortisol” instead of “prolactin”.

SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

5. Main Therapeutic Trials

Purpose

Full scale therapeutic trials should not be performed before earlier studies have shown a useful therapeutic effect and the effective dose range has been established. They are intended to confirm, in various types of patient population, the drug’s basic activity and other properties in man, to determine individual variations in the response and to define similarities to and differences from drugs in current use and if possible non-pharmacological form of treatment.

To date, as pointed out in Section 2, the antipsychotic drugs available are closely similar in their primary effects, whatever their structure, but certain differences sufficient to affect the choice of drug in a particular patient can be present and need to be identified; they include:

(a) The presence of stimulant or sedative effects
(b) The incidence of extrapyramidal reactions
(c) The occurrence of non-C.N.S. adverse reactions, e.g. involving salivation or the haematopoietic system.

Selection of Patients

The selection of patient samples for investigation should be representative of the anticipated use. Each sample should be relatively homogenous and comprise a specified type of patient, so that the effects of the drug in each of the samples can be determined with reasonable confidence.

All patients should show psychopathology of sufficient severity to permit measurement of remissive changes. The primary condition to be studied is generally schizophrenia. Acute onset schizophrenia is to be distinguished and handled separately from insidious onset schizophrenia. Psychiatric conditions that must be studied separately, if at all, include:

- acute manic states
- certain rare motor disorders (e.g. Huntington’s chorea)
- involutional psychoses
- persistent toxic psychoses, particularly due to metals

These conditions constitute the main indications for antipsychotic drugs though a number of other well recognized syndromes sometimes react to neuroleptic drugs and if is studied must again be dealt with separately, e.g.

- paranoid psychoses
- alcoholic psychoses
- drug withdrawal in acute toxic psychosis due to medicaments.

These drugs can also be used to supplement other forms of treatment in certain other conditions, e.g. drug withdrawal in acute toxic psychosis due to medicaments.

Finally, once the efficacy and safety of the drug can be considered as demonstrated in physically healthy adults, certain special patient groups, notably the elderly and children, should be studied separately, if it appears that the new drug may be of value in these groups.

All the above studies should be conducted both under inpatient and outpatient conditions, insofar as these settings are appropriate to its anticipated use.

Setting

In this phase, a neuroleptic drug should be tested in inpatients, outpatients and transitional settings insofar as its anticipated use is appropriate to these settings.

Design of Studies

Studies should provide comparisons with other drugs and other methods of treatment. Tests should be carried out under double-blind conditions wherever possible. Great emphasis should be put on the size of the patient groups in order to enhance the possibility of detecting significant differences.

Use of Placebo

See section 9.