

Escitalopram in the treatment of the obsessive-compulsive disorder

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Introduction

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a debilitating and chronic mental disorder, with lifetime prevalence rates estimated to be as high as 2% worldwide. This disorder typically presents in a person in the early 20s. For many patients, OCD tends to be chronic, with many people experiencing features of OCD over decades. People with OCD also suffer from a lower quality of life compared with healthy controls (2).

Until the availability of the tricyclic antidepressant clomipramine, pharmacotherapy resulted in little, if any, improvement in OCD. The efficacy of clomipramine in OCD is now well established, and its inhibition of serotonin reuptake guided attention to a possible role for serotonin in OCD. Since the introduction of clomipramine, other pharmacological approaches to treat OCD using medication have developed that predominantly include the use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI) (1).

Objectives

This study has two main objectives: Firstly, to describe the characteristics of those patients with OCD diagnosis visited in Barcelona's Sant Martí Sud outpatient mental health center and also to describe the use in them of escitalopram.

Methods

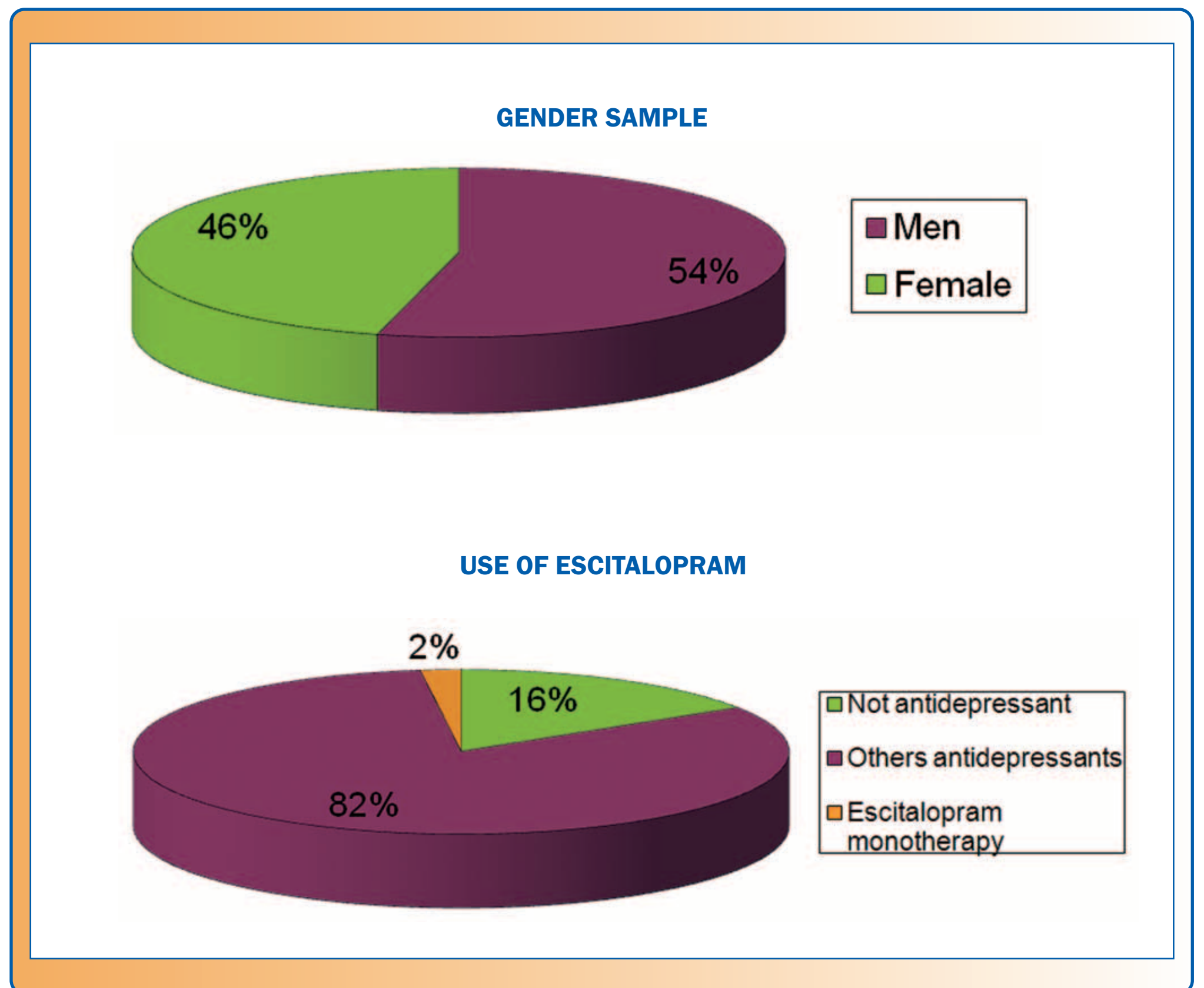
This is a descriptive and transversal study. It includes all the patients who have been visited in Sant Martí Sud outpatient mental health center during the year 2009. Sociodemographical data (gender, age, years of evolution of illness) and clinical data are analysed with SPSS 15.5 statistical package.

Results

It is obtained a sample of 50 patients (54% men), mean age 44.7 ± 12.82 years, with an average number of years of evolution of illness of 12.24 ± 7 years.

The 16% of the sample did not receive any psychopharmacological treatment.

Out of the other 84%, just 2% was treated with escitalopram and always in monotherapy. In our sample didn't exist the use of escitalopram in combined therapy.



Conclusions

There are several studies that show the emerging role of escitalopram in the treatment of OCD. Several factors suggest that escitalopram may have considerable clinical potential in the treatment of adult OCD: it is an SSRI, like other drugs that are considered to be first-line drug treatments for OCD; it is the most selective of the SSRIs; it has shown efficacy in other anxiety disorders including social anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder; it is well tolerated and has favourable pharmacokinetics. These are important features for a drug used to treat a highly chronic condition.

In spite of all this, escitalopram is only used in the 2% of our sample, so the results of the present study should be taken into consideration when treating this disorder.

References

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