

Homicidal Ideation Associated with Low Dose Risperidone in a 10-Year-Old Boy: Subsequently Rage Responded Very Well to Low Dose Clonidine - Case Report

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Abstract: The homicidal ideation that arose when risperidone was prescribed, was an entirely new symptom, and it resolved when risperidone was ceased. An extensive literature search found no similar case reports. The response to clonidine was equally dramatic.

Keywords: Risperidone, homicidal, clonidine, child, neglect.

I took over the medical care of a ten-year-old boy, referred to me by a clinical psychologist. He weighed 29.6 kg. Height was 131.7 cm.

His parents adopted him at the age of 15 months. Before this age, there was good evidence he had been neglected as when his new parents adopted him, he weighed 1 kg less than the 3rd percentile. Care was optimal from the age of 15 months. As well as intense clinical psychological treatment including parent work from the psychologist, the boy had been treated initially with fluoxetine 10 mg in the morning, titrating up to 15 mg daily. The use of fluoxetine had not been successful. When I took over his care, fluvoxamine that had been titrated up to 75 mg daily was stopped, as suicidal ideation had emerged. Between frequent rage attacks that were precipitated by any very minor stressor, this ten-year-old functioned reasonably well. The adoptive parents were becoming exhausted.

I prescribed risperidone 0.25 mg as needed for aggression, 8 hours between doses, then 13 days later, 0.25 mg twice daily.

As soon as he commenced the regular risperidone, he started to experience new onset inexplicable homicidal thinking, towards peers and adults at random, even if that person had not irritated the child in any way. There was no apparent reduction in impulsive violence. The risperidone was ceased 15 days after it had been commenced with rapid resolution of the homicidal ideation. Next, I prescribed olanzapine, oro- dispersible, 2.5 mg at night, without any beneficial response.

Finally, I prescribed clonidine 25 micrograms at night for two days, then 25 micrograms twice daily, which coincided with the remarkable cessation of the violent outbursts. Twelve months later he was discharged from the child mental health service, still taking clonidine.

Clonidine is a centrally acting alpha2 agonist. Focusing on clonidine for aggression and violence, a literature search elicited Hunt RD *et al.*, 1990 [1], who wrote, "The major effect of clonidine might be to ameliorate the excessive arousal seen in several psychiatric disorders."

A literature search focusing on homicidal ideation arising during risperidone treatment found Moore TJ *et al.*, 2010 [2]. In this study from general population data from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Adverse Event Reporting System (AERS), it was concluded the association with homicidal ideation or violence was "weaker and mixed for antipsychotic drugs".

No other articles or case reports linking risperidone with homicidal ideation were found in the Medline limited to an English language search, adapted for use in Embase, PsycINFO, Scopus, and PubMed.

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