Efficacy of amantadine on quality of life in patients with chronic hepatitis C treated with interferon-alpha and ribavirin: results from a randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind trial

Bernd Kronenberger, Thomas Berg, Eva Herrmann, Holger Hinrichsen, Peter Buggisch, Ulrich Spengler, Tobias Goeser, Samer Nasser, Karsten Wursthorn, Gerd R Pape, Uwe Hopf & Stefan Zeuzem

AIM: The aim of this study was to investigate whether amantadine reduces deterioration of quality of life in patients with chronic hepatitis C during and after treatment with interferon-alpha (IFN-alpha) and ribavirin. PATIENTS AND METHODS: In this randomized, prospective, placebo-controlled, multicenter trial, previously untreated patients with chronic hepatitis C were treated with IFN-alpha plus ribavirin [17] and randomized for treatment with amantadine (200 mg/day, orally, n=136) or placebo (n=131). Quality of life was assessed with the 'Profile of Mood States' scale and the 'Everyday Life' questionnaire at baseline, treatment week (TW) 8, TW24, TW48, and at follow-up. RESULTS: Early during treatment at TW8, quality of life was not different between patients in the control and the amantadine group. At TW24, the control group but not the amantadine group, however, showed significant deterioration of the modalities depression, fatigue, and vigor compared with baseline. Especially, nonresponders in the amantadine group showed significantly lower deterioration of depression, anger, mind function, everyday life, and zest for life than those in the placebo group. After treatment, the beneficial effects of amantadine disappeared. CONCLUSION: The addition of amantadine to IFN-alpha plus ribavirin combination therapy may reduce deterioration of depression, fatigue, and vigor during treatment but does not affect quality of life after treatment.