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Effectiveness and safety of Wuling capsule for post stroke depression: A systematic review



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KEYWORDS

Wuling capsule; Conventional treatment; Post stroke depression (PSD); Systematic review; Meta-analysis

Summary

Objective: To review the effectiveness and safety of Wuling capsule for post stroke depression (PSD) systematically.

Methods: We searched electronic databases for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) that compared either Wuling capsule with placebo, no treatment or Wuling capsule plus conventional treatment with conventional treatment alone in adults with post stroke depression. Relevant resources were also retrieved. Two reviewers screened the citations, assessed the risk of bias and extracted data independently.

Results: A total of 16 studies involving 1378 patients were identified for this review. There were 3 trials comparing Wuling capsule with no treatment control and 13 trials comparing Wuling capsule plus conventional treatment (Deanxit, Fluoxetine, Sertraline, Paroxetine or Citalopram) with conventional treatment alone. Meta-analyses indicated Wuling capsule used alone or integrated with conventional treatment was effective for PSD in terms of HAMD (Hamilton depression scale) scores, response rate and with less adverse effects, of which, HAMD scores decreased significantly in favor of Wuling capsule from onset time to 1 week (SMD=1.27, 95%CI: 0.71-1.83, P<0.00001), 2 weeks (SMD=1.45, 95%CI: 0.57-2.33, P=0.001), 4 weeks (SMD=2.84, 95%CI: 2.15-3.52, P<0.00001), 6 weeks (SMD=2.70, 95%CI: 2.15-3.24, P<0.00001), and 8 weeks (SMD=4.53, 95%CI: 3.55-5.50, P<0.00001) and overall effect (SMD=2.40, 95%CI: 1.75-3.05, P<0.00001) (SMD=standardized mean difference).

Conclusion: Wuling capsule appeared to present certain antidepressant effect compared to no treatment control. With a combination of several Western medicines, Wuling capsule could be helpful in strengthening efficacy and reducing the incidence of adverse events as an alternative choice in the treatment of PSD. However, due to the limited number of included trials and relatively moderate methodological quality in the majority of studies, further large scale and rigorously designed trials are warranted to confirm the effectiveness and safety of Wuling capsule for post stroke depression.

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550 L. Peng et al.

Contents

Introduction	550
Methods	551
Criteria for considering studies for this review	551
Type of studies	551
Types of participants	551
Types of interventions	551
Types of outcome measures	551
Search strategies	551
Electronic searches	551
Searching other resources	552
Data collection and analysis	552
Selection of studies	552
Data extraction and management	552
Assessment of risk of bias in included studies	552
Statistical analysis	552
Results	552
Study selection	552
Characteristics of included studies	552
Assessment of risk of bias in included studies	555
Primary outcomes	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule vs. no treatment	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule plus Deanxit vs. Deanxit alone	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule plus Fluoxetine vs. Fluoxetine alone	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule plus Sertraline vs. Sertraline alone	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule plus Paroxetine vs. Paroxetine alone	555
HAMD scores changes: Wuling capsule plus Citalopram vs. Citalopram alone	555
Secondary outcomes	555
Response rate: Wuling capsule vs. no treatment	555
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus Deanxit vs. Deanxit alone	556
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus Fluoxetine vs. Fluoxetine alone	556
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus Sertraline vs. Sertraline alone	556
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus Paroxetine vs. Paroxetine alone	556
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus Citalopram vs. Citalopram alone	556
Response rate: Wuling capsule plus antidepressants vs. antidepressants alone	556
Safety evaluation	558
Publication bias	558
Discussion	558
Conclusion	565
Funding	565
Author's contribution	565
Conflicts of interest	565
References	565

Introduction

As the third leading cause of death in the world, stroke is a major health issue in elderly population because it not only affects physical impairment, but also leads to a high risk of disability, social nonparticipation (handicap) and psychological problem. 1,2 Of those, depression is the most common neuropsychiatric comorbidity of a stroke. 3 Post stroke depression (PSD) is often accompanied by disorders of recognition, causing adverse influence on patient recovery and it has been the most serious factor causing low quality of life in patients. 4 The incidence of post stroke depression varies from 23.0% to 76.1% in China. 5 Mortality in depressed stroke patients has been estimated between

3.5 and 10 times higher than in non-depressed stroke patients; suicide ideation can be observed in 11.3% of stroke patients too.⁶ Although depression may influence functional recovery and quality of life after stroke, such condition is often ignored. In fact, only a minority of patients is diagnosed and even fewer are treated in the common clinical practice.⁷

Currently, pharmacotherapy, psychotherapy, or electroconvulsive therapy was selected in the treatment of depression in patients with stroke. The main therapeutic approach of PSD is essentially pharmacological. Drugs therapy showed the importance of antidepressant medications, particularly with SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) as this may improve not only the life expectancy of post stroke patients but also their quality of life. By the serotonic post stroke patients but also their quality of life.

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