OLFACTION IN PARKINSON DISEASE PATIENTS TAKING RASAGILINE: A CASE SERIES

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Introduction: Significant neurodegenerative changes have often occurred by the time a patient with Parkinson’s disease (PD) develops motor symptoms. Identifying PD earlier provides opportunity to utilize disease-modifying treatments which may slow further neurodegeneration. Hyposmia is a non-motor feature of PD often presenting years before motor symptoms develop, and may be an early biomarker for PD. Results of the ADAGIO study indicate potentially beneficial effects of the MAO-B inhibitor, rasagiline (1mg/day).

Aim: To evaluate the effect of rasagiline on olfaction in PD.

Methods: 13 PD patients were identified and assessed at baseline using the UPDRS-III, and the University of Pennsylvania Smell Identification Test (UPSIT) to measure olfaction. All had motor symptoms. Patients were then started on rasagiline, 1mg/day, for additional motor-symptom management. UPDRS-III and UPSIT were reassessed 3 months after rasagiline initiation.

Results: The average UPDRS-III and UPSIT scores at baseline were 15.6 and 20.0, respectively. At 3-month follow-up, the average UPDRS-III and UPSIT scores were 16.0 and 21.0. Six of 13 patients (46%) had improved UPSIT scores (average: 3-point increase), 4(31%) had no change, and 3(21%) worsened (average: 2-point decrease).

Conclusion: UPSIT scores in 10/13 patients (77%) either improved or stabilized with rasagiline. While these changes are modest, they suggest a trend toward stabilization of PD progression and perhaps studies longer than 3 months may show even more interesting results. Evaluating rasagiline’s effects on hyposmia during pre-motor stages of PD would be useful. Two investigator initiated trials (IIT) are ongoing to assess rasagiline effects on olfaction in PD patients (NCT01007630 & NCT00902941).