

Drug Treatment for Internet Addiction
Dr. Kimberly Young
Clinical Director
The Center for Internet Addiction Recovery
www.netaddiction.com

This study conducted by the Mount Sinai School of Medicine has established that Escitalopram is one drug therapy for treating problematic Internet use. Details of the study are enclosed. Behavioral methods should be applied for treatment of Internet addiction in addition to any form of drug therapy and a physician should be consulted.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether Lexapro (Escitalopram) is safe and effective in treating problematic internet use in a Phase IV study. Based upon US FDA Resources, the study focused on treatment protocols with 31 Internet addicts, 18 to 65 years old, including both genders. Interventional in nature, it was an uncontrolled, single group assignment, safety/efficacy experimental study of Escitalopram (10 mg/day) in the treatment of Internet addiction that ran from December of 2002 to October of 2004.

Further study details as provided by Mount Sinai School of Medicine:

Primary Outcome Measures:

- length of non-essential Internet use in hours/week as well as CGI-Improvement [Time Frame: baseline and biweekly for 10 weeks]
[Designated as safety issue: No]

Secondary Outcome Measures:

- ratings on depression, anxiety, impulsivity, self-esteem, obsessive-compulsive symptoms [Time Frame: baseline and biweekly for 10 weeks]
[Designated as safety issue: No]

Detailed Description:

Many individuals experience marked distress and functional impairments as a result of their perceived inability to control their 'non-essential' (non-job/school related) use of the Internet. Frequently these people develop a preoccupation with the Internet, a need for escape to the Internet, and increasing irritability when trying to cut back use of the Internet. There have been no studies to date looking at the effectiveness of medications in the treatment of this disorder. In our clinical experience, we find these patients with Internet addiction usually respond to serotonin reuptake inhibitors within 12 weeks. This study will examine the efficacy of escitalopram in Internet addiction among adults.

Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Subject has signed an informed consent form

2. Current diagnosis of Internet addiction
3. Age ³ 18
4. Subject must be able to take oral medication
5. Subject may be in psychotherapy initiated at least three months prior to Screening. Subject must not discontinue or otherwise alter this therapy during the study.
6. In the opinion of the investigator, the subject is capable of complying with all study procedures.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Current suicidal or homicidal ideation
2. Subject has a primary diagnosis of schizophrenia or other psychotic disorders
3. Subject has a primary diagnosis of Bipolar I disorder
4. Current pedophilia
5. Current DSM-IV diagnosis of substance dependence or abuse, excluding nicotine
6. Women of child-bearing potential who are pregnant, nursing, or not using contraception
7. Use of antidepressants at a therapeutic level for the treatment of problematic internet use within 2 weeks prior to study entry (or 4 weeks for use of MAOIs, or 6 weeks for use of fluoxetine)
8. Current use of antidepressants at a therapeutic level for the treatment of a disorder other than problematic internet use
9. Subject has any organic mental disorder
10. Clinically significant unstable medical disorder

Contacts and Locations

Please refer to this study by its ClinicalTrials.gov identifier: NCT00565422

Responsible Party: Mount Sinai School of Medicine (Dr. Eric Hollander)
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Problematic internet use

Escitalopram

Lexapro