Efficacy of Baclofen in the Treatment of Alcoholism

H. Rippel and F. Kreuzeder, Paradigmenwandel.org May 2010, PW 4-10

General

This evaluation is based on a survey performed at the internet forum www.alkohol-und-baclofen-forum.de in March 2010. Included in the evaluation is a total of 45 respectively 54 participants (for the evaluation of the side effects only). The ratio of men to women is roughly 2:1. More than 90% of the participants have had a strong dependency from alcohol. No restrictions concerning daily Baclofen dosage, consumption of alcohol, additional medications and accompanying measures of the treatment were prescribed. The individual objectives for the treatment with Baclofen are split into abstinence (52%) resp. Moderate Drinking (48%):

At the survey date the actual situation of the participants is as follows:

- Abstinence 59%
- Moderate Drinking 32%
- Detoxification, Relapse 9%

The mean value for the medication duration of Baclofen is 68 days. 59% of the participants were not engaged in any accompanying measure.

Dosage

Fig. 1 gives the daily self-administered dosage of Baclofen during the initial 20 days of medication. The wide spread of the individual daily dosage is demonstrated by the maximum and minimum values. The mean value for the durable dosage, mostly achieved within less than one month, is 67 mg per day leading to a weight related dosage of 0.95 mg/Kg (women) respectively 0.79 mg/Kg (men). Fig. 2 gives the splitting of the durable dosage into 4 ranges.

![Dosage of Baclofen](image)

**Fig. 1** Daily dosage of Baclofen for the initial 20 days of treatment

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Efficacy and Side Effects

The efficacy at the survey date (fig. 3) is calculated for three parameters: craving, motivation and interest to consume alcohol. The evaluation is split into subgroups:
- Participants with the objective abstinence (AB)
- Participants with the objective Moderate Drinking (MT)
- Participants in withdrawal (WD)

The relative strength is defined as: 0=no, 1=weak, 2=medium and 3=strong.

The side effects (fig. 4) are calculated for two subgroups: less than 100 mg per day (mean value 63 mg) and more than 100 mg per day (mean value 152 mg). The relative strength of side effects is significantly stronger in the high dosage group.
Fig. 4 Side effects of Baclofen treatment for the high dose and moderate dose group
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Treatment Results

Abstinence
21 participants started the treatment with the objective abstinence. In addition 6 participants which began the treatment with the objective Moderate Drinking were abstinent at the date of survey.
The mean duration for abstinence among these 27 persons was 59 days; one relapse after 42 days of abstinence and 3 laps was noted which leads to a rate of abstinence of 96.3%.
The influence of accompanying psychotherapy is visible in the mean duration of abstinence of 89 days compared to 43 days without psychotherapy.

Moderate Drinking
A measure for the figure of merit is more difficult for this group
14 participants out of 21 started with the objective of Moderate Drinking have achieved the permanent dosage (mean value of 64 mg per day, minimum dosage 15 mg and maximum dosage 150 mg per day). One person has terminated the treatment. The mean value of consumption of alcohol in this group is 1.5 standard drinks per day. The mean value of the duration for stable Moderate Drinking is 99 days (maximum 211 days, minimum 26 days).
Conclusions

The remarkable quote for abstinence of 96.3% was achieved with a mean dose of 63 mg per day. Therefore an increase of the dosage to the high dose region well above 150 mg per day is not justified. The side effects for the moderate dosage is weak except for the fatigue in the evening. Whereas for the high dose group the side effects are significantly stronger. The combination of Baclofen treatment in combination to an accompanying psychotherapy could develop to the Gold Standard for the treatment of alcoholism.

In addition our results indicate that Moderate Drinking (mean: 1.5 standard drinks per day) in combination to a moderate baclofen dosage is feasible without any increase of side effects.

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