Fluvoxamine for prevention of clinical deterioration in early COVID-19: Results from a randomized placebo-controlled trial

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Background: COVID-19 may lead to an excessive inflammatory response resulting in cardiopulmonary complications and lung injury. Fluvoxamine might prevent this clinical deterioration through its action on the sigma1 receptor, which can down-regulate cytokine production.

Methods: Stop COVID was a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, fully-remote (contactless) clinical trial of fluvoxamine. Participants included 152 adult outpatients with confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection, with symptom onset within 7 days. They were randomized to receive fluvoxamine 100mg (n=80), or placebo (n=72), three times daily for 15 days. The primary outcome was clinical deterioration over 15 days, defined by meeting both of the following: (1) shortness of breath and/or hospitalization for shortness of breath or pneumonia; (2) oxygen saturation <92% on room air or need for supplemental oxygen to achieve oxygen saturation ≥92%.

Results: 152 participants were randomized in the modified intention to treat group. No patients (0/80, 0%) in the fluvoxamine group clinically deteriorated, compared to 8.3% (6/72) in the placebo group (log-rank chi-square 6.8, p=0.009).

Conclusions: Outpatients treated with fluvoxamine early in the course of symptomatic COVID-19 had a lower likelihood of clinical deterioration over 15 days. Due to the small sample size and short follow-up duration, larger randomized controlled trials are needed to confirm clinical efficacy.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Dr Lenze received grants from the COVID Early Treatment Fund, the Taylor Family Institute for Innovative Psychiatric Research, and the Center for Brain Research in Mood Disorders, for this study. He has also received grant funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, Takeda, Alkermes, Janssen, Acadia, and the Barnes Jewish Foundation. He has received consulting fees from Janssen and Jazz Pharmaceuticals. Dr. Zorumski is on the Scientific Advisory Board of Sage Therapeutics and also has stock and stock options with Sage Therapeutics. Prof. Miller has received research funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute.

Funding/Support: This study was supported by the Taylor Family Institute for Innovative Psychiatric Treatment at Washington University and the COVID-19 Early Treatment Fund. Additional support came from the Center for Brain Research in Mood Disorders at Washington University, the Bantly Foundation, and National Institutes of Health grant UL1TR002345.