

Citation: Fu, D.-J., Turkoz, I., Simonson, R. B., Walling, D., Schooler, N. R., Lindenmayer, J.-P., Mahmoud, R., & Alphs, L. (2015). Paliperidone palmitate once-monthly reduces risk of relapse of psychotic, depressive, and manic symptoms and maintains functioning in a double-blind, randomized study of schizoaffective disorder. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 76(3), 253–262. <https://doi.org/10.4088/JCP.14m09416>

Link: <https://www.psychiatrist.com/jcp/paliperidone-palmitate-once-monthly-reduces-risk-relapse/>

Purpose of the review: The purpose of this study was to evaluate whether once-monthly paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna) was effective in preventing relapse of psychotic, depressive, and manic symptoms in patients with schizoaffective disorder, while also assessing its ability to maintain overall functioning. The study specifically examined relapse prevention in patients receiving the medication either as monotherapy or with antidepressants or mood stabilizers.

Methods used: The researchers conducted a 15-month randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled relapse-prevention study involving patients with schizoaffective disorder who were experiencing acute psychotic and mood symptoms. First, patients were stabilized on once-monthly paliperidone palmitate. After stabilization, participants were randomly assigned to either continue receiving paliperidone injections or switch to placebo. Researchers then monitored patients for relapse of psychotic, depressive, or manic symptoms and evaluated overall functioning using the Personal and Social Performance (PSP) scale.

Key findings:

- Paliperidone palmitate significantly delayed time to relapse compared with placebo.
 - Patients in the placebo group had a relapse risk about 2.5x higher than those maintained on paliperidone
 - Overall relapse rates were 33.5% in the placebo group vs 15.2% in the treatment group
- The medication was effective both as monotherapy and adjunctive therapy, though relapse prevention appeared somewhat stronger with monotherapy
- Patients receiving paliperidone maintained better personal and social functioning throughout the study
- Common side effects of paliperidone included weight gain, insomnia, headache, and mild EPS
- Overall, the study supports once-monthly paliperidone palmitate as an effective maintenance treatment for reducing relapse risk and preserving functioning in schizoaffective disorder

Application to my patient: Pt is a 41 YOM with schizoaffective disorder (bipolar type) who presented with worsening agitation, irritability, and bizarre behavior after discontinuing long-acting Invega injections due to perceived side effects. Per collateral from his mother, his symptoms had previously been well controlled while adherent to treatment, suggesting psychiatric worsening in setting of medication non compliance.

The study by Fu et al. applies directly to this patient because it demonstrated that once-monthly paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna) significantly reduced relapse of psychotic, depressive, and manic symptoms in patients with schizoaffective disorder and helped maintain overall functioning. This supports restarting long-acting Invega in this patient to reduce future relapse risk and improve long-term psychiatric stability.