Effect of donepezil on sleep and activity in Alzheimer’s disease: actigraphic and polysomnographic assessment

Junya TSUKADA 1), Soichi MIZUNO 2), Tetsuya KAWAMUKAI 3), Yoshiaki KIYOHARA 1), Michihiko MATSUSHITA 1), Koji OGOMORI 1), Yasushi INAMI 4), Ryoji NISHIMURA 1), Jun HORIZUCHI 3)

1) Department of Psychiatry, Fukuoka University School of Medicine, Fukuoka University
2) Department of Psychiatry, Mihara Hospital
3) Department of Psychiatry, Shimane University School of Medicine
4) Ehime Rosai Hospital

Abstract

Objective: To examine the effect of donepezil on sleep and activity in patients with Alzheimer’s Type Dementia (ATD) using polysomnography and actigraphy.

Methods: Ten patients with mild to moderate ATD (mean Clinical Dementia Rating score: 1.5 ± 0.5, mean age 76 ± 6.2 years) were studied. Alzheimer’s Disease Assessment Scale-cognitive component-Japanese version (ADAS-Jcog), polysomnography, and 7-day recording of actigraphy data were performed at baseline. Following baseline assessment, 5 mg of donepezil was administered in the morning for 6 weeks. Following this treatment period, the same examinations were performed in all patients.

Results: After 6 weeks treatment with donepezil, daytime activity increased significantly after 6 weeks. Similarly, rapid eye movement (REM) sleep (p < 0.01) and sleep efficiency (p < 0.05) increased significantly compared with baseline. Although the ADAS-Jcog score did not decrease significantly, there is significant positive correlation between the decrease in the ADAS-Jcog score and the increase in daily activity.

Conclusion: Donepezil treatment enhances daytime activity, sleep efficiency and REM sleep. In addition, there is significant positive correlation between the decrease in the ADAS-Jcog score and the increase in daily activity. These results suggest that donepezil activate central cholinergic systems and reduce daytime sleepiness. Moreover, reduction of daytime sleepiness may causes increase of attention and improve cognitive abilities.

Key words: Donepezil, Sleep, Mortor activity, Alzheimer’s type dementia