



LETTERS

CLOZAPINE DEATHS

Antibody deficiency in patients taking clozapine

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Although clozapine reduces overall mortality in schizophrenia,¹ a growing body of evidence links its use with higher rates of admission to hospital for pneumonia²⁻⁴ and mortality.⁵⁻⁸ Various mechanisms have been proposed for the rise in pneumonia, including sedation, sialorrhoea and aspiration, agranulocytosis, and smoking.^{9,10} Following the introduction of calculated globulin screening in Wales,¹¹ we found a novel and striking association between use of the antipsychotic clozapine and antibody deficiency.¹² Patients taking clozapine follow an intensive regimen of blood testing for the rare risk of agranulocytosis (with cumulative incidence of <1% cases), but antibody testing is not included in existing clozapine monitoring programmes. We urge consideration of this potential mechanistic explanation as a modifiable risk factor for the higher rates of pneumonia and sepsis related mortality reported in this vulnerable cohort.

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