TREATMENT OF NEUROTIC DISORDERS

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Appl. No.: 11/837,317
Filed: Aug. 10, 2007

Related U.S. Application Data
Continuation of application No. 10/637,821, filed on Aug. 7, 2003, which is a division of application No. 10/021,126, filed on Dec. 12, 2001, now Pat. No. 7,271,194, which is a continuation of application No. PCT/DK00/00377, filed on Jul. 7, 2000.

Foreign Application Priority Data
Jul. 8, 1999 (DK)........................ PA 1999 00991

Publication Classification
Int. Cl.
A61K 31/343  (2006.01)
A61P 25/24  (2006.01)
A61K 9/48  (2006.01)

U.S. Cl. ........................ 514/469; 424/451

ABSTRACT
Use of escitalopram (the S-(+)-enantiomer of citalopram) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the preparation of a medicament useful in the treatment of neurotic disorders is provided, including anxiety states, in particular generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and panic attacks.
TREATMENT OF NEUROTIC DISORDERS

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to the use of the compound escitalopram (INN-name), which is the S-enantiomer of the well-known antidepressant drug citalopram, i.e. (S)-1-[3-(dimethylamino)propyl]-1-(4-fluorophenyl)-1,3-dihydro-5-isobenzofurancarbonitrile, or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof for the preparation of medicaments for the treatment of neurotic disorders, including anxiety states and panic attacks.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Citalopram is a well-known antidepressant drug that has now been on the market for some years and has the following structure:

\[ \text{Formula I} \]


[0004] Escitalopram and a method for its preparation are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,943,590. The stereo selectivity of citalopram, i.e. the 5-HT-reuptake inhibition in the S-enantiomer, and accordingly, the antidepressant effect of said enantiomer is also disclosed. S-citalopram is now in development as an antidepressant.

[0005] Studies have shown that patients suffering from neurotic disorders including anxiety disorders, especially generalized anxiety, and panic attacks, in particular in association with agoraphobia, have a quality of life impairment comparable with or greater than the disability found in patients with alcoholism, schizophrenia or personality disorders. Furthermore, current treatments are not always effective or cause unacceptable side effects.

[0006] Consequently, there is a need for alternative therapies useful in the treatment of neurotic disorders.

[0007] Escitalopram has now been found to show potent effects in models of neurotic disorders such as anxiolytic effect and prominent effect in the treatment of panic attacks and obsessive compulsive disorder.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0008] According to the present invention, a novel use of escitalopram, namely for the preparation of a medicament useful in the treatment of neurotic disorders is provided.

[0009] Throughout this specification and claims the term neurotic disorders is used to designate a group of mental disorders, including anxiety states, in particular generalized anxiety disorder and social anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder and panic attacks.

[0010] The terms generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder and obses sive compulsive disorder are as defined in DSM IV.

[0011] The phrase “panic attacks” contemplates treatment of any disease, which is associated with panic attacks including panic disorder, specific phobias, social phobia and agoraphobia in which panic attacks occur. These disorders are further defined in the DSM IV. A panic attack is a discrete period in which there is a sudden onset of intense apprehension, fearfulness or terror, often associated with feelings of impending doom. During the attack, symptoms such as palpitations, sweating, trembling, sensations of shortness of breath, feeling of choking, chest pain or discomfort, nausea, feeling dizzy, feelings of unreality, fear of losing control or going crazy, fear of dying, paraesthesia and chills or hot flushes are present.

[0012] Panic disorders are characterized by recurrent unexpected panic attacks about which there is a persistent concern. Agoraphobia is anxiety about, or avoidance of, places or situations from which escape might be difficult or in which help may not be available in the event of a panic attack. Specific phobia and social phobia (together formerly simple phobia) are characterized by marked and persistent fear that is excessive or unreasonable, cued by the presence or anticipation of a specific object or situation (flying, heights, animals, seeing blood etc.) or social performance situations.

[0013] The disorders in which panic attacks occur are differentiated from each other by the predictability of the occurrence of the attacks, for example, in panic disorder the attacks are unpredictable and not associated with any particular event, whereas in specific phobia the attacks are triggered by specific stimuli.

[0014] The phrase “treatment of panic disorder” means a reduction in the number or prevention of attacks and/or relief of the severity of the attacks. Similarly, the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, post traumatic stress disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder include the treatment or prevention of these diseases, or the relief of the symptoms thereof.

[0015] According to the invention, escitalopram may be used as the base of the compound or as a pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salt thereof or as an anhydride or hydrate of such salt. The salts of the compound used in the invention are salts formed with non-toxic organic or inorganic acids, in particular the oxalate.

[0016] Escitalopram has been found to show prominent effects different from the effects of the racemate in the “Inhibition of footshock-induced ultrasonic vocalization in adult rats”—test, the “Mice Black and White Test” setup,
and in the polydipsia test. These models are standard animal models for anxiolytic effect and effect on panic attacks and for obsessive compulsive disorder, respectively.

[0017] According to the invention, escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof may be administered in any suitable way e.g. orally or parenterally, and it may be presented in any suitable form for such administration, e.g. in the form of tablets, capsules, powders, syrups or solutions or dispersions for injection. Preferably, and in accordance with the purpose of the present invention, the compound of the invention is administered in the form of a solid pharmaceutical entity, suitably as a tablet or a capsule or in the form of a suspension, solution or dispersion for injection.

[0018] Methods for the preparation of solid pharmaceutical preparations are well known in the art. Tablets may thus be prepared by mixing the active ingredients with ordinary adjuvants and/or diluents and subsequently compressing the mixture in a convenient tableting machine. Examples of adjuvants or diluents comprise: corn starch, lactose, talcum, magnesium stearate, gelatine, lactose, gums, and the like. Any other adjuvant or additive such as colourings, flavourings, preservatives, etc. may also be used provided that they are compatible with the active ingredients.

[0019] The compound of the invention is most conveniently administered orally in unit dosage forms such as tablets or capsules, containing the active ingredient in a dose from about 1.0 mg to 50 mg, preferably 5 mg/day to 40 mg/day, most preferably 10 mg/day to 20 mg/day.

[0020] The oxalate of escitalopram may be prepared as described in U.S. Pat. No. 4,943,590 and the base and other pharmaceutically acceptable salts may be obtained therefrom by standard procedures.

[0021] Thus the arid addition salts used according to the invention may be obtained by treatment of escitalopram with the acid in an inert solvent followed by precipitation, isolation and optionally re-crystallization by known methods and if desired micronization of the crystalline product by wet or dry milling or another convenient process, or preparation of particles from a solvent-emulsification process.

[0022] Pharmacological Tests

[0023] Escitalopram was tested in well recognized and reliable test models of effects on neurotic disorders. Citolopram-racemate was included for comparison purposes.

[0024] The footshock-Induced Vocalization Test in Adult Rats


[0026] Experimental Procedure

[0027] Male rats (Wistar W U, Charles River, Germany), weighing 150-175 g at the beginning of the study were used.

[0028] Briefly, test cages (22 cm x 22 cm x 22 cm) made of grey Perspex and equipped with a metal grid floor were used. Footshocks were delivered from a two pole shocker and a microphone sensitive to ultrasounds in the range of 20-30 kHz was placed in the centre of the lid of the test cage. The ultrasounds were sent from the microphone to a preamplifier and converted from AC signals to DC signals in a signal rectifier. The accumulated time, in which the voltage of the rectified signal was larger than the voltage of a previously determined threshold level, was recorded.

[0029] Twenty-four hours before the first test session the animals were primed. A rat was placed in each test cage and received, immediately thereafter, four 1.0 mA inescapable footshocks each of a duration of 10 sec and with an intershock interval of 5 sec. The animals were left in the test cage for 6 min after the last shock. On test days, drug or saline was given 30 min before test. The rats received four 1.0 mA inescapable footshocks each of a duration of 10 sec. The intershock interval was 5 sec. Recording of ultrasonic vocalization started 1 min after the last shock and lasted for 5 min. The total time spent on vocalization was recorded. After a wash-out period of one week the rats were used in a new test session. The rats were used for a total of 7-8 weeks. At each test session, the animals were randomly allocated to treatment with saline or test drug. Each treatment group consisted of 8 animals, one saline and 24 drug treated groups were included at each session. Each drug was tested at least in two separate experiments with overlapping doses.

[0030] Results

[0031] The experiments showed that the maximum effect was 60-70% inhibition for citolopram-racemate whereas escitalopram was able to inhibit vocalization completely.

[0032] Black and White Box Test

[0033] This is a test for anxiolytic effects. The test model is further described in Sánchez, C. (1995) Pharmaeuol. Toxicol. 77, 71-78.

[0034] Test Procedure

[0035] Male mice (Lundbeck strain, Charles River, Germany) weighing 30-35 g were housed in groups of 4 in macropolar cages type II with a reversed 12 h light/night cycle (lights off 7 p.m.). The mice were adapted to the reversed light/dark cycle for at least 3 weeks prior to testing. The room temperature (21±2° C.), relative humidity (55±5%), and air exchange (16 times per h) were automatically controlled. The animals had free access to commercial food pellets and water.

[0036] The test box used was designed as described by Sánchez (1995) supra. Briefly, the test box (45 cm x 27 cm x 27 cm) was open-topped and divided into two compartments (ratio 2:3) by a partition which was black on the side facing the black compartment and white on the side facing the white compartment. The smaller chamber was made of black perspex. The larger chamber was made of white perspex except for the lowest 7.5 cm. This part was made of transparent perspex (outer walls) and black perspex (partition). The white compartment was connected to the black compartment by a 7.5 cm x 7.5 cm opening in the partition. The floor of the white compartment was divided into 9 fields, and the floor of the black was divided into 6 fields. The white compartment was illuminated by means of a Schott KL 1500 electronic lamp emitting cold light corresponding to a light intensity of 560 lux. The mouse test system was fully automated by 2 rows of 11 infrared light sources and photocells in the transverse direction and 1 row
of 16 in the longitudinal direction (lower row). The lower row of photoreceptors (2 cm above cage floor) detected horizontal locomotor activity (crossing, entries, and time in each compartment), whereas the upper row of photoreceptors (5 cm above cage floor) detected rearing activity. The accumulated data for 1 min intervals were recorded from 4 test boxes simultaneously and stored in a Paradox database.

[0037] The test boxes were placed in a dark and quiet room. The mice were transported to the test room in a darkened container about 2 h before test. The test room was separated into two parts by a black curtain. The drug treatment took place in one part of the room using a minimum of red light. After dosing, the mice were placed individually in macrolon type II cages until test. The pretreatment time was 30 min. The test boxes were placed in the other part of the room. The test was started by placing the mouse in the centre of the brightly-lit white compartment facing the opening to the black compartment. The test duration was 5 min and the number of rears and line crossings between squares in both the black and the white compartment, number of entries into the black compartment and time spent in the white compartment were assessed.

[0038] Results

[0039] Escitalopram showed prominent effects in this model.

[0040] Schedule-Induced Polydipsia

[0041] Food-deprived rats exposed to a procedure in which food is delivered intermittently will drink large amounts of water if given the opportunity to do so. This behavioral phenomenon is called schedule-induced polydipsia and can be considered as an excessive expression of a normal behavior. Schedule-induced polydipsia is regarded as a model of obsessive-compulsive disorder (Woods et al. 1993).

[0042] Test Procedure:

[0043] Male Wistar rats (Möllegård) housed in pairs and kept on a food-restricted diet (80% of normal body weight) for 2 weeks before the start of testing and throughout the duration of testing. To induce polydipsia rats were placed in test chambers where a pellet dispenser automatically dispensed one 60 mg food pellet every 60 seconds. Water was available at all times in the test chamber. Rats were tested 4-5 times per week, after 34 weeks training 70% of the rats were drinking >10 ml per 30 min test session.

[0044] Once the rats had attained a steady drinking level compounds could be tested. Citalopram (40 mg/kg) or Lu 26-054 (20 mg/kg) were administered orally 60 min prior to testing and at 10:00 on the non-test days. The water intake was presented as a percentage of the pre-dosing (baseline) level.

[0045] Results:

[0046] Escitalopram produced a significant reduction in water intake, whereas citalopram was without effect.

[0047] All these studies show that escitalopram has potent anti-anxiety effects, in particular anxiolytic effects and effects on panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

1-14. (canceled)

15. A method of treating obsessive-compulsive disorder in a patient in need thereof comprising administration of a pharmaceutically effective amount of escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to the patient.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable acid addition salt thereof is administered as a unit dosage form.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the unit dosage form is a tablet.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the unit dosage form in a capsule.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the method comprises administering 1.0 to 50 mg/day of escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to the patient.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the method comprises administering 5 to 40 mg/day of escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to the patient.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein the method comprises administering 10 to 20 mg/day of escitalopram or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof to the patient.

22. The method of claim 15, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

23. The method of claim 16, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

24. The method of claim 17, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

25. The method of claim 18, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

26. The method of claim 19, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

27. The method of claim 20, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

28. The method of claim 21, wherein the salt of escitalopram is escitalopram oxalate.

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