

Common Estrogen Drug May Help Women With Schizophrenia Control Certain Symptoms

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According to recent findings, a common estrogen receptor modulator drug called Evista (raloxifene) can help reduce the severity of delusions and hallucinations in women with refractory schizophrenia without the need for antipsychotics, [MedPage Today reports](#).

Doctors currently prescribe raloxifene to treat osteoporosis and reduce the risk of breast cancer in postmenopausal women. But the drug also has effects on the brain.

For the study, a team of mental health experts at Monash University in Melbourne, gave 56 women living with refractory schizophrenia (a form of the mental illness resistant to antipsychotic drugs) either Evista or a placebo as part of a randomized controlled trial. After 12 weeks of therapy, scientists found that those who received the drug had a much greater reduction in their Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS) total score compared with those on a placebo. (The PANSS measures the severity of symptoms suffered by patients with schizophrenia.)

Researchers noted that many women with schizophrenia seem to experience a major intensification in their mental illness symptoms when their estradiol (a type of estrogen) levels are low. Estradiol levels can drop during the follicular phase of a woman's menstrual cycle, after she gives birth and during her transition into menopause.

In addition, previous research showed that regular estrogen therapy could help reduce psychotic symptoms in women with treatment-resistant schizophrenia. But until now, the effects of this treatment on women's breast tissue and endometrium have raised concerns among doctors and canceled out any potential benefits of estrogen treatment.

What makes this study different is that unlike regular estrogen therapy, Evista exerts estrogenic effects only on the brain. But the drug acts as an estrogen antagonist, or blocker, in breast and ovarian tissues.

In conclusion, researchers noted that this study's findings were incredibly promising for the potential development of alternative schizophrenia treatment options. But scientists also said further research must be conducted to determine the long-term safety and efficacy of using drugs

like Evista for women with schizophrenia and much larger trials are needed to confirm the drug's efficacy.

To learn more about available treatment options for schizophrenia symptoms, [click here](#).

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