Antidepressants in urine using the Triage® TOX Drug Screen fluorescent immunoassay followed by confirmation via direct injection LC-MS/MS

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Introduction

Tricyclic antidepressants (TCA) are used for the treatment of anxiety disorders, mild to moderate pain as well as depression; however there are serious negative side-effects associated with their routine use, including dizziness, drowsiness, increased heart rate and even death. In suspected toxic cases, the availability of a rapid test is useful, but previous TCA immunoassays have suffered from poor specificity and/or false positive results.

Objectives

To determine the contribution of glucuronidated urine metabolites towards a positive result using an immunoassay. Since glucuronide reference compounds are not commercially available, the identification of antidepressant metabolites in urine was carried out by LC-MS/MS before and after hydrolysis of the authentic specimens to characterize the immunoreactive assay.

Methods

Urine specimens were screened for the presence of TCAs using a fluorescent immunoassay (Alere Triage® TOX Drug Screen) calibrated with desipramine at a cutoff 1000 mg/L. The positive specimens were analyzed for parent TCA drugs using a standard LC-MS/MS method consisting of an Agilent 1200 Series HPLC equipped with a Zorbax Eclipse XDB C18 (4.6 x 50mm x 1.8 mm) heated to 45°C, coupled to a 6410 triple quadrupole mass spectrometer, operating in positive electrospray ionization mode (ESI). Samples were eluted using a gradient of methanol and water with 0.2% acetic acid. A new LC-MS/MS method was developed for the identification and quantification of hydroxylated and demethylated TCA metabolites. In addition, using this new method, the same specimens were analyzed before and after hydrolysis with β-glucuronidase to assess glucuronide contributions to the positive results in the immunoassay.

Results & Discussion

While the concentration of the measured antidepressants increased following hydrolysis, the most dramatic increases were for amitriptyline (AMI). 7 samples contained nortriptyline (NT), 10-OH-NT, and AMI. Following hydrolysis, NT averaged an increase of 33%; 10-OH-NT, 118% & AMI over 3500%.

Quantitation of parent TCAs and their hydroxylated and demethylated metabolites by LC-MS/MS is insufficient when correlating with immunoassay based screening protocols like Triage® TOX Drug Screen, which also detects glucuronidated TCA metabolites. LC-MS/MS results generated after enzymatic hydrolysis of TCA metabolite glucurononides account for total amounts of TCAs and their metabolites, and such results correlate well with Triage® TOX Drug Screen results.

Summary

While the concentration of the measured antidepressants increased following hydrolysis, the most dramatic increases were for amitriptyline (AMI). 7 samples contained nortriptyline (NT), 10-OH-NT, and AMI. Following hydrolysis, NT averaged an increase of 33%; 10-OH-NT, 118% & AMI over 3500%.

TCA Method Comparison: TOX DS vs. TOX DS II;

Positive (N=49) % Agreement 100 (99.9%CI) (92.3,100.0)
Negative (N=40) % Agreement 100 (95%CI) (91.2,100.0)
Total % Agreement (95% CI) 100 (95.8,100.0)

Note: All 95% Confidence intervals were calculated using the Wilson Score with no continuity correction applied.

References

3. Product Inserts: Alere Triage® TOX Drug Screen (DS) has the following assays: APAP, AMP, mAMP, BAR, BZO, COC, MTD, OPI, PCP, THC; Alere Triage® TOX Drug Screen II (510k submitted to FDA) has TOX DS menu plus SAL, MDMA, and OXY assays.

SOFT /TIAFT San Francisco 2011, Abstract #025