

Some benefits from donepezil in Alzheimer's disease

Clinical Question	How effective is donepezil in people with mild, moderate and severe dementia due to Alzheimer's disease (AD)?
Bottom Line	There was moderate-quality evidence that people with mild, moderate or severe dementia due to AD treated for periods of 12 or 24 weeks with donepezil experienced small benefits in cognitive function, activities of daily living and clinician-rated global clinical state. There was no evidence of a difference between donepezil and placebo for patient total healthcare resource utilisation. Benefits on 23 mg/day were no greater than on 10 mg/day, and benefits on the 10 mg/day dose were marginally larger than on the five mg/day dose, but the rates of withdrawal and of adverse events before end of treatment were higher the higher the dose.
Caveat	Most studies were of six months' duration or less. Only one small trial lasted 52 weeks. There did not appear to be any effect of donepezil on quality of life. Seventeen of the 28 studies were industry funded or sponsored.
Context	AD disease is the most common cause of dementia in older people. One approach to symptomatic treatment of AD is to enhance cholinergic neurotransmission in the brain by blocking the action of the enzyme responsible for the breakdown of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. This can be done by a group of drugs known as cholinesterase inhibitors such as donepezil.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Birks JS and Harvey RJ. Donepezil for dementia due to Alzheimer's disease. Cochrane Reviews, 2018, Issue 6. Art. No.: CD001190.DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001190.pub3. This review contains 30 studies involving 8,257 participants.

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Systematic review link:

<https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD001190.pub3/full>