



Arriving at Long-Acting Therapy: Clinical Considerations for Injectable Antipsychotics

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Disclosures

The planners and speakers have indicated that there are no relevant financial relationships with any ineligible companies to disclose.

Abbreviation Key

BMI: Body Mass Index

CI: Confidence Interval

CrCl: Creatinine Clearance

CYP: Cytochrome P450 Enzymes

ED: Emergency Department

EPS: Extra Pyramidal Side-Effects

FDA: Food and Drug Administration

FGA: First Generation Antipsychotic

HR: Hazard Ratio

LAI: Long-Acting Injection

PK: Pharmacokinetic

QoL: Quality of Life

QTc: Corrected QT interval

RCT: Randomized Controlled Trial

RR: Risk Ratio

SGA: Second Generation Antipsychotic

SMD: Standardized Mean Difference

Learning Objectives

At the end of this session, learners should be able to:

- Identify the available long-acting injectable (LAI) antipsychotics and how their pharmacokinetic properties influence clinical use.
- Compare long-acting injectable antipsychotics to their oral counterparts in terms of patient level outcomes.
- Recognize patient-specific factors that influence the selection and initiation of long-acting injectable antipsychotics.
- Select treatment plans for patients utilizing long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Identify the available long-acting injectable antipsychotics and how their pharmacokinetic properties influence clinical use.

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Background

Available LAI's

Pharmacokinetics

Clinical Use Implications

Disease States Treated with LAIs

- Schizophrenia
 - Affects 1% of the global population
 - Chronic disorder characterized by positive, negative, and cognitive symptoms
 - Positive: delusions, hallucinations, disorganize speech/behavior, conceptual disorganization
 - Negative: avolition and reduced expression
 - Cognitive: deficits in attention, memory, and processing speed
 - Etiology: genetics, environmental risks (prenatal complication, psychosocial stress, cannabis), neurobiological factors (dopamine and glutamate dysfunction, brain structure changes)

So How Can LAIs Help?

Goals of Therapy with LAIs in Schizophrenia

Primary Goals

- Enhance medication adherence
 - Missed doses-even brief gaps-significantly increase relapse and hospitalization risk.
- Maintain symptom stability
 - Continuous receptor occupancy with LAIs supports sustained control of positive and negative symptoms
- Delay disease progression
 - Preventing Relapse helps limit functional decline and loss of autonomy over time

Disease States Treated with LAIs

- Bipolar disorder
 - Lifetime prevalence is 2.4% globally
 - Chronic mood disorder with episodes of depression and mania (I) or hypomania (II)
 - Classifications: Bipolar I, Bipolar II, cyclothymic disorder, and related disorders
 - Etiology: unknown but involves genetics, neurochemical, environmental

Goals of Therapy with LAIs in Bipolar Disorder

Primary Goals

- Reduce hospitalization and inpatient days
- Prevent mood relapses
 - Reduce hypo/manic recurrences
- Enhance adherence and treatment continuity
 - Benefits are seen primarily in patients maintaining full adherence to LAIs, underscoring adherence as a key therapeutic event

What are LAIs?

- Long-acting injectable antipsychotics are depot formulations that deliver medication over weeks to months
- Designed to improve adherence and reduce relapse when compared to daily oral antipsychotics
- Commonly recommended in guidelines for patients with poor adherence or frequent relapse

Why LAIs Matter?

- Up to 50% of patients with schizophrenia discontinue oral antipsychotics within 1 year
- Nonadherence increases relapse, and hospitalizations
- Patients may experience improved quality of life and satisfaction with treatment

How do LAIs Work?

- Intramuscular or subcutaneous depot injections provide sustained medication release
- Formulation technology influences absorption and duration of action
- Some injections may require oral overlap upon initiation while others achieve therapeutic levels quickly

Available LAIs

Class	Medication	Dosing Intervals	Indications
First-Generation Antipsychotics (FGA)	Haloperidol decanoate	Monthly	Schizophrenia
	Fluphenazine decanoate	Monthly	Schizophrenia
Second-Generation Antipsychotics (SGA)	Aripiprazole lauroxil (Aristada®) Aripiprazole(Abilify Astimufii®) Aripiprazole (Abilify Maintena®)	Aripiprazole lauroxil (Aristada®): Every 4 to 8 weeks depending on dosing Aripiprazole(Abilify Astimufii®): Every 2 months Aripiprazole (Abilify Maintena®): Monthly Bipolar 1, Schizophrenia	Schizophrenia: All Bipolar 1: Aripiprazole (Abilify Astimufii®)
	Olanzapine Pamoate (Zyprexa Relprev®)	Every 2 or 4 weeks (dose-dependent)	Schizophrenia
	Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Hafyera®) Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna®) Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Trinza®)	Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Hafyera®): Every 6 months Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna®): Monthly Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Trinza®): Every 3 months	Schizophrenia
	Risperidone (Risperdal Consta®) Risperidone (Perseris®)	Risperidone (Risperdal Consta®): Biweekly Risperidone (Perseris®): Monthly	Bipolar 1, Schizophrenia

LAIs Administered at WI/IL Advocate Health Pharmacies

- Aripiprazole
 - Abilify Maintena®
 - *Not* Abilify Aristada® or Astimufii®
- Haloperidol decanoate (Haldol® decanoate)
- Paliperidone Palmitate
 - Invega Sustenna®
 - *Not* Invega Hafyera®
- Risperidone
 - Risperdal Consta®, Uzedy®
 - *Not* Perseris®

Pharmacokinetic Properties of LAIs

- Drug release depends on formulation technology
 - Microspheres
 - Nanocrystals
 - ATRIGEL®
 - Decanoate esters
- Absorption rate determines the oral overlap needs
- Half-life of medications often extended which allows for monthly or longer dosing
- Steady state is reached after multiple doses (vary by agent)
- The PK profile directly impacts initiation strategies, dosing intervals and adverse event management

Formulation Technology Drives PK

Graphical Abstract

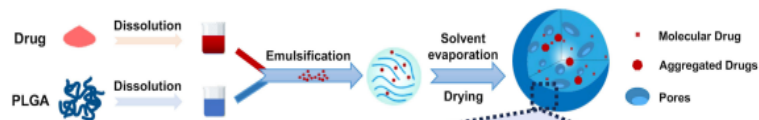
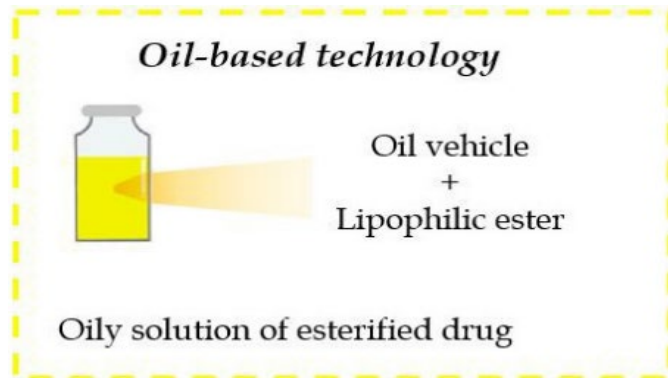
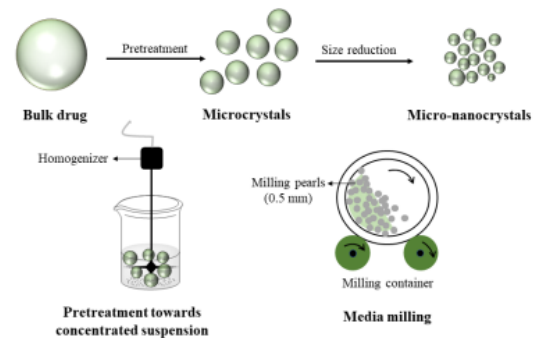


Figure 1. Schematic view of the ATRIGEL drug delivery technology

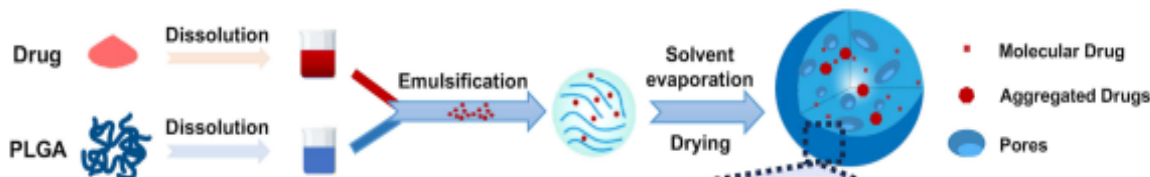


Formulation: Microspheres

Risperidone (Risperdal Consta®)

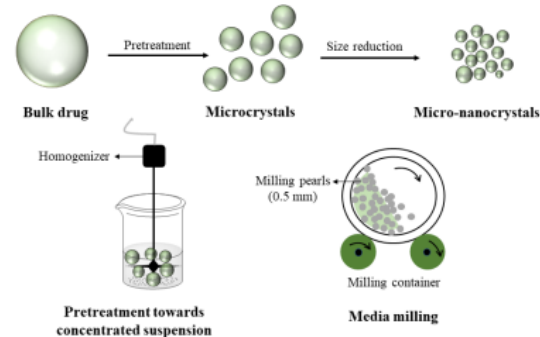
- Drug is embedded in polymer beads
- Emulsification + Solvent drying forms the beads
- Pores in beads slowly erode, controlling the release over time
- Requires oral overlap until steady state
- Expected time to onset: ~3 weeks

Graphical Abstract



Formulation: Nanocrystals (Paliperidone)

- Drug crystalized, then wet-milled into nano-sized particles
- Increased surface area→ faster dissolution and stable release
- Rapid therapeutic levels→ no oral overlap needed
- Used in paliperidone products with different intervals (monthly to every 6 months)
- Onset: Begins on day one and continues up to four months.



Formulation: ATRIGEL®

Risperidone (Perseris®)

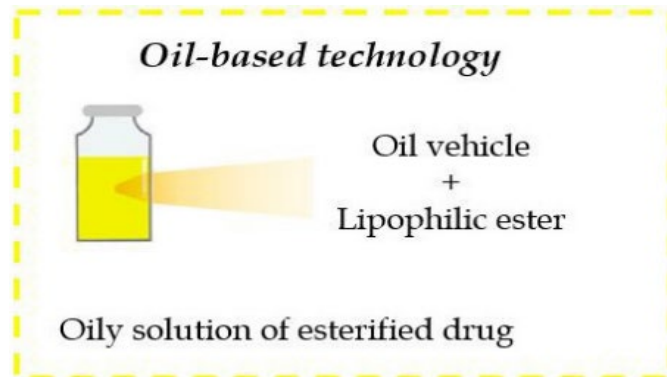
- Risperidone dissolved in liquid polymer + solvent system
- After injection → solvent exchanges with bodily fluids → polymer solidifies into depot
- Depot slowly biodegrades, releasing drug
- Provides rapid onset and sustained exposure
- Onset: Within days to weeks

Figure 1. Schematic view of the ATRIGEL drug delivery technology



Formulation: Esterification (Decanoates: Fluphenazine, Haloperidol)

- Drug chemically linked to fatty acid (decanoate)
- Makes drug lipophilic→ suspended in oil vehicle
- Once injected, depot forms; ester bond hydrolyzed back into active drug
- Provides monthly release profile
- Onset: ~ 6 days for both decanoates



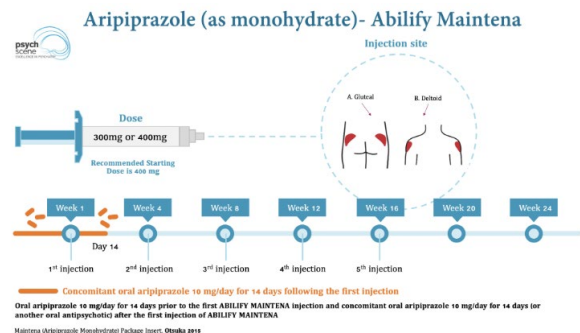
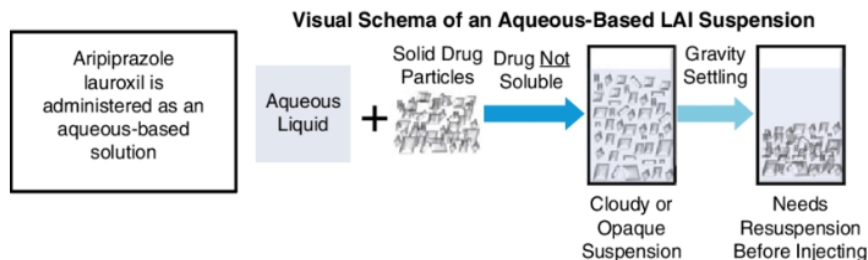
Formulation: Aqueous Suspension & Lyophilized Powder (Aripiprazole)

Aripiprazole lauroxil (Abilify Aristada®)

- Formulation: Aqueous-based suspension with solid drug particles
- Appearance: Cloudy/opaque suspension

Aripiprazole (Abilify Maintena®)

- Formulation: Lyophilized powder for reconstitution → prolonged release suspension
- Appearance: Milky/opaque after reconstitution



Summary of LAI Pharmacokinetics

Drug	Formulation	Half-Life	Dosing Interval	Expected Onset
Haloperidol Decanoate	Decanoate Ester	~3 weeks	Monthly	~6 days
Fluphenazine Decanoate	Decanoate Ester	1-3 weeks	Every 2-4 weeks	~6 days
Aripiprazole (Aristada®)	Nanosuspension	29-54 days	Monthly	Initio dosing: ~4 days No Initio dosing: ~3 weeks
Aripiprazole (Abilify Maintena®)	Monohydrate Suspension	29-46 days	Monthly	~14 days
Olanzapine pamoate (Relprevv®)	Salt Suspension	30 days	Every 2-4 weeks	~7 days
Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna®)	Nanocrystals	25-49 days	Every 4 weeks	~1 day
Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Trinza®)	Nanocrystals	84-95 days	Every 3 months	~1 day
Risperidone (Risperidal Consta®)	Microspheres	3-6 days	Every 2 weeks	~3 weeks

Oral Overlap Requirements of LAIs

Requires Oral Overlap

- Aripiprazole (Abilify Maintena®)
 - Fourteen day overlap
 - Option 1: Abilify Maintena® 400mg + single dose aripiprazole 20 mg
 - Option 2: Abilify Maintena® 400mg + 14 day concurrent use with oral aripiprazole or current oral antipsychotic

Oral Overlap Requirements of LAIs

Requires Oral Overlap

- Aripiprazole Lauroxil (Aristada®)
 - Option 1: 1 dose Aristada INITIO® 675 mg (injection), followed by initial dose of Aristada® (injection) + single dose oral aripiprazole
 - May receive second injection same day as Aristada® or up to 10 days after INITIO® loading dose
 - Option 2: After first injection of Aristada®, take oral aripiprazole for 21 days

Oral Overlap Requirements of LAIs

Requires Oral Overlap

- Fluphenazine
 - Establish tolerability using short-acting fluphenazine prior to initiating LAI

Oral Overlap Requirements of LAIs

Requires Oral Overlap

- Risperidone (Risperdal Consta[®])
 - Three week oral overlap

Oral Overlap Requirements of LAIs

No Overlap Required

- Haloperidol Deconoate (Haldol®)
- Olanzapine pamoate (Zyprexa Relprevv®)
- Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna®)
- Paliperidone palmitate (Invega Trinza®)
- Risperidone (Uzedy®)

Clinical Implications of PK

- Initiation
 - Oral overlap depends how quickly therapeutic levels are achieved
 - Tolerability testing with oral formulation
- Dosing Intervals
 - Long half-lives support extended dosing
- Steady State & Monitoring
 - True steady state may take months
 - Clinical response shouldn't be judged too early
 - Early side effects may persist longer due to extended half-life

Assessment Question 1

Which long-acting formulation uses polymer beads that delay drug release, requiring an oral overlap period?

- A. ATRIGEL®**
- B. Esterification**
- C. Microspheres**
- D. Nanocrystals**

Identify the available long-acting injectable antipsychotics and how their pharmacokinetic properties influence clinical use.

Compare long-acting injectable antipsychotics to their oral counterparts in terms of patient level outcomes.

Recognize patient-specific factors that influence the selection and initiation of long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Select treatment plans for patients utilizing long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Improved Adherence with LAIs

Hospitalizations and ED Admissions

Healthcare Utilizations and Costs

Quality of Life (QoL) Improvements

LAIs and Their PK Properties for Clinical Use

Improved Adherence with LAIs

- Systematic review and meta-analysis of 137 studies, n = 397,319
 - Design: 32 randomized controlled trials (RCT), 65 cohort studies, 40 pre-post studies
 - Primary outcome: hospitalizations and relapse
 - RCTs: RR 0.88 (95% CI 0.79 - 0.99)
 - Cohort: RR 0.92 (0.88 - 0.98)
 - Pre-post: RR 0.44 (0.39 - 0.51)

Improved Adherence with LAIs (cont.)

- Limitations:
 - Adverse event reporting is unclear or incomplete
 - Not all studies used the same antipsychotics for both LAI and oral forms
 - Limits direct comparisons and introduces variability in efficacy
 - Heterogeneity – varied across studies and subgroup analysis was used to explore benefits
 - Subgroup analysis: 25 of 37 subgroups showed no significant difference which indicates a robust study overall

Takeaway Message

- Despite limitations, LAIs show consistent advantages in preventing relapse and hospitalization
- Findings support clinical use of LAIs to improve long-term outcomes in patients with schizophrenia

Hospitalizations and ED Admissions

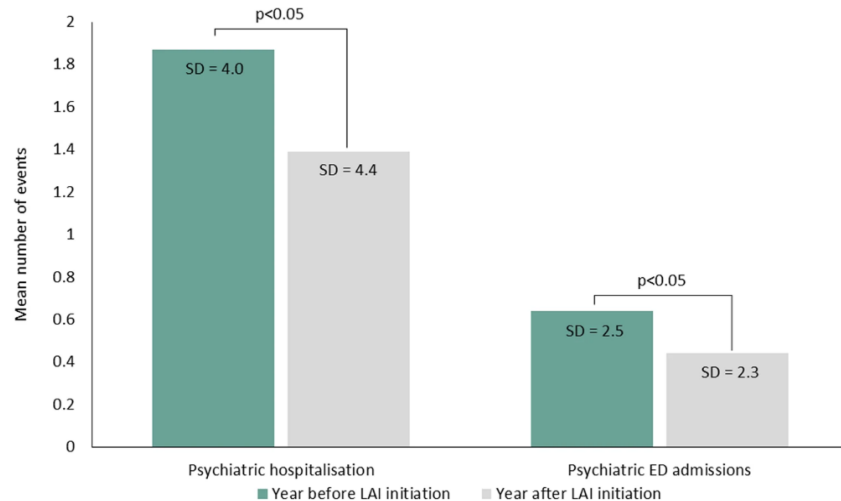
- Mirror-image study on LAI effectiveness
 - Objective: evaluate real word effectiveness of LAI's in schizophrenia in reducing psychiatric hospitalizations, duration of hospitalizations, and psychiatric ED admissions
 - Design: mirror-image study, France 2015-2016
 - Population: 12,373 patients with schizophrenia
 - Compared 1 year on oral dosage form to 1 year post-LAI initiation

Hospitalizations and ED Admissions (cont.)

- Standardized mean differences (SMD) for one year before with oral antipsychotics and one year after LAI initiation
- LAI initiation reduced
 - Psychiatric hospitalizations (SMD = -0.19)
 - Duration of hospitalization (SMD = -0.26)
 - Psychiatric ED admissions (SMD = -0.12)

Fig. 2

From: [Real-world effectiveness of long-acting injectable antipsychotic treatments in a nationwide cohort of 12,373 patients with schizophrenia-spectrum disorders](#)



Healthcare utilization relating to psychiatric care one year before LAI initiation (during oral AP treatment) and one year after LAI initiation.

Hospitalizations and ED Admissions (cont.)

- Limitations
 - Effects of involuntary commitment
 - No adjustment for confounders – social determinants of health, illness severity
 - Generalizability issues due to location of study
 - Clozapine not analyzed separately

Takeaway Message

- LAIs improve outcomes in non-compliant schizophrenia patients by reducing the number of psychiatric hospitalizations and emergency visits.

Healthcare Utilizations and Costs

- One-year retrospective mirror-image study in China
- Utilized once-monthly paliperidone palmitate (Invega Sustenna®)
- Switched 72 patients from oral antipsychotic to Invega Sustenna®
- Primary focus: investigate impact of Invega Sustenna® on treatment patterns, healthcare resource use, and economic outcomes related to schizophrenia treatment

Healthcare Utilizations and Costs (cont.)

Clinical utilization outcomes

- Decreased hospitalizations, ER visits, and direct medical costs (all with $p < 0.001$)
- In patients with ≥ 1 hospitalization prior to LAI switch:
 - $>90\%$ reduction in hospitalizations, hospital days, and costs ($p < 0.001$)

Economic outcomes

- Pharmacy costs increased 222% ($p < 0.001$)
 - Invega Sustenna® = 88% of total pharmacy cost
- Total costs increased by 16% overall ($p < 0.001$)

Healthcare Utilizations and Costs (cont.)

- Limitations
 - Short follow-up (1 year)
 - Conducted at a single site
 - Small sample size
 - Cost analysis is limited to direct costs, not indirect costs such as productivity and caregiver costs

Takeaway Message

- Switching from oral antipsychotics to Invega Sustenna® reduced hospitalization, emergency visits, and overall healthcare resources.
 - However this comes at the expensive of higher costs of the LAI, which may limit its adoption within institutions

Quality of Life Improvements

- Systematic review of 111 studies investigating antipsychotics effectiveness on quality of life (QoL) improvements
 - Compared: dosage forms (oral, depot, LAI), generations (first, second, third), and patient characteristics
 - Results:
 - QoL often a secondary outcome in most trials
 - Second generation antipsychotics showed better QoL improvements vs first generation
 - LAI's showed more stable QoL

Quality of Life Improvements (cont.)

- Limitations
 - QoL not usually a primary endpoint which leads to less robust data
 - More than half of the studies recruited patients from outpatient settings which typically have less severe illness than inpatient
 - Different tools used to measure QoL: Clinical Global Impression-Severity, World Health Organization Quality of Life , Social and Occupational Functioning Assessment Scale, Quality of Life Scale
 - QoL is a complex construct that may not be accounted for in assessment and may not be influenced by treatment
 - Social context, support systems, and clinical factors (e.g. severity of negative symptoms, cognition)

Takeaway Message

- Second generation LAIs are associated with more stable and improved QoL for patients with schizophrenia.
- However, QoL is not prioritized in clinical trials by manufactures despite it being a key factor in treatment selection.
- Holistic views of patients are necessary in patients with behavior disorders such as schizophrenia.

LAIs and Their PK Properties for Clinical Use

Outcome	Oral Antipsychotics	LAI Antipsychotics
Adherence/Persistence	High rates of non-adherence due to pill burden, stigma and side effects	Improved adherence and persistence; reduced relapse risk
Hospitalization/ED Use	Higher relapse-related admissions and ED visits	Reduced hospitalization and ED visits after LAI initiation
Healthcare Utilization/Cost	Lower drug acquisition cost but higher overall healthcare costs (driven by hospital use)	Higher drug acquisition cost but reduced total cost through fewer admissions
Quality of Life / Functioning	Variable; Adherence challenges often limit benefit	Improved stability, functioning, and patient reported QoL

Assessment Question 2

Which of the following best summarizes the patient-level benefits of LAI antipsychotics compared to oral antipsychotics based on current evidence?

- A.** LAIs are associated with increased pharmacy costs but reduced hospitalizations, relapse rates, and more stable quality of life.
- B.** LAIs show no significant difference in relapse or hospitalization rates compared to oral antipsychotics.
- C.** LAIs are only beneficial for patients with severe schizophrenia in inpatient settings.
- D.** LAIs consistently outperform oral antipsychotics in all clinical and economic outcomes across all patient populations.

Identify the available long-acting injectable antipsychotics and how their pharmacokinetic properties influence clinical use.

Compare long-acting injectable antipsychotics to their oral counterparts in terms of patient level outcomes.

Recognize patient-specific factors that influence the selection and initiation of long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Select treatment plans for patients utilizing long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Relapse History

Missed Doses and Appointments

Metabolism Considerations

Patient Characteristics

Administration Factors

Real-World Effectiveness of LAIs vs Orals in Medicare Patients with Schizophrenia

- Design: Retrospective, Medicare cohort
- Population: Adults 18 or older with schizophrenia
- Intervention: LAI vs oral antipsychotics
- Primary Outcomes:
 - Treatment discontinuation
 - Treatment failure (hospitalization, switch or death)

Outcomes

- Discontinuation
 - Oral risperidone: Reference group
 - LAI risperidone: Hazard Ratio (HR) 0.43 (95% CI 0.19-0.67, $p < 0.05$)
 - Other LAIs: HR 0.55 (95%CI 0.35-0.75, $p < 0.05$)
- Treatment Failure
 - Oral risperidone: reference group
 - LAI risperidone: HR 0.69 (95% CI 0.53-0.85 $p < 0.05$)
 - Other LAIs: HR 0.72 (95% CI 0.60-0.84, $p < 0.05$)
- Takeaway
 - LAIs significantly reduced treatment discontinuation and failure compared with oral risperidone demonstrating improved persistence and effectiveness in real world use

Real-World Effectiveness of LAIs vs Orals in Medicare Patients

Outcome	Oral Risperidone (Reference)	LAI Risperidone HR (95% CI)	Other LAIs HR (95% CI)
Discontinuation	1.0	0.43 (0.19-0.67)	0.55 (0.35-0.75)
Treatment Failure	1.0	0.69 (0.53-0.85)	0.72 (0.60-0.84)

Delayed or Skipped Doses

- Missed oral doses
 - Most common reason for relapse
- LAIs improve adherence by reducing daily pill burden
- LAI selection depends on
 - Injection frequency
 - Flexibility of missed dose window
 - Some LAIs have grace periods, while others may require a re-initiation protocol
- Patients with history of missed doses may benefit from longer interval LAI

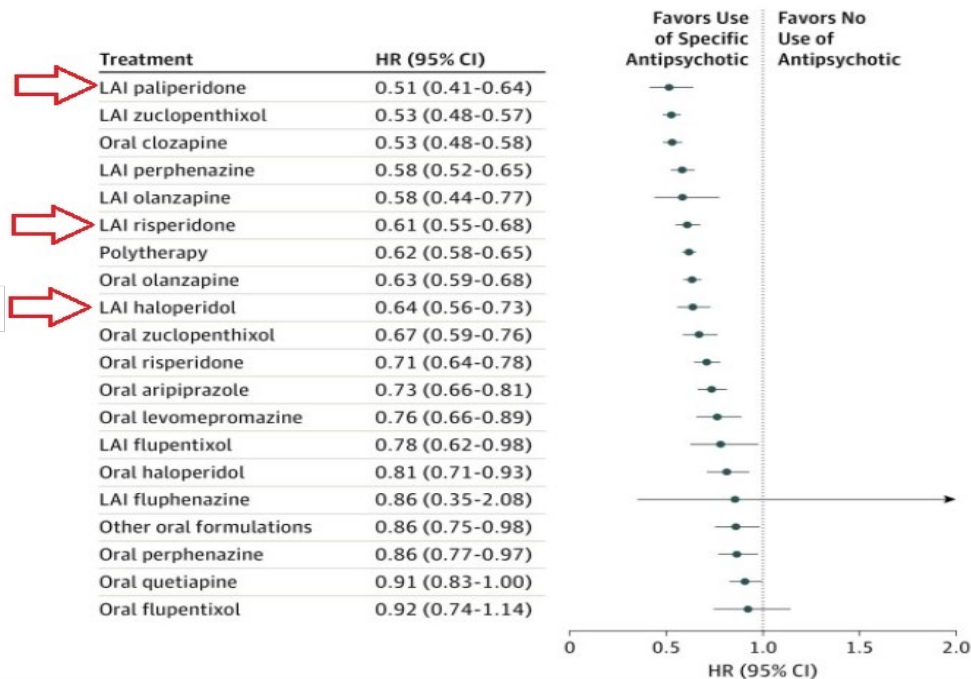
Missed Appointments as a Patient-Specific Factor

- Missed injection visits are common in real-world practice
- Risk factors: transportation issues, unstable housing, stigma, limited insight, competing priorities
- Consequences for missed doses:
 - Decreased adherence
 - Increased relapse risk
 - Increased ED visits and hospitalizations

Missed Doses & Risk of Relapse

- Missed doses/appointments = strong predictor of relapse and hospitalization
- Real-world data
 - 29,823 patients with schizophrenia, 5.7-year follow-up
 - Paliperidone LAI: HR 0.51 (95% CI 0.41-0.64, $p < 0.001$)
 - Risperidone LAI: HR 0.61 (0.55-0.68)
 - Haloperidol LAI HR 0.78 (0.72-0.84)

LAIs vs Oral Antipsychotics on Risk of Hospitalization



Strategies to Address Missed Appointments

- Agent Selection
 - Consider agents with "greater grace period" flexibility
 - Longer-interval LAI may reduce visit burden
- Pharmacist Role
 - Identify high-risk patients and implement solutions
 - Reminder calls, align injections with prescription refills or other clinic visits

Renal Considerations for LAIs

- Some LAIs rely on renal elimination
- Impaired renal function leads to:
 - Slow clearance of medication
 - Increase risk for adverse effects
- Dose adjustments or avoidance may be needed in moderate-to-severe impairment
- Clinical takeaway: Always assess renal function before selecting an LAI

Hepatic Metabolism

- Most SGA LAIs undergo hepatic metabolism via CYP450 enzymes (CYP2D6, CYP3A4)
- FGA LAIs also rely on hepatic metabolism
- Drug interactions
 - Strong CYP inhibitors may increase exposure; strong inducers may lower efficacy
- Clinical pearls: Adjust dose if persistent coadministration is unavoidable, otherwise monitor closely or consider alternatives

Metabolic Considerations

Medication	Clearance Pathway	CYP Enzymes	Renal Consideration
Aripiprazole	Hepatic Metabolism	CYP2D6, 3A4	No adjustment needed
Haloperidol	Hepatic Metabolism	CYP2D6, 3A4	No adjustment needed
Paliperidone	Primarily renal elimination	Minimal CYP involvement	Reduce dose if Creatinine Clearance (CrCl) 50-80 mL/min; Avoid if CrCl < 50 mL/min
Risperidone	Hepatic→ active metabolite is paliperidone	CYP2D6, 3A4	Slower clearance in renal impairment Consta®: Consider 12.5mg every 2 to 4 weeks

CYP2D6 Considerations

- Aripiprazole
 - Substrate of CYP2D6/3A4
 - Poor metabolizers have higher drug exposure and should be initiated at a lower dose
 - Adjust dose if on strong CYP2D6 inhibitors (fluoxetine, paroxetine)
- Haloperidol
 - CYP2D6/3A4 metabolism
 - Poor metabolizers may have increased plasma concentrations
 - Manage clinically with monitoring/adjustment
- Paliperidone palmitate
 - No CYP considerations
- Risperidone
 - CYP2D6 metabolizes to active metabolite (paliperidone)
 - Poor metabolizers increase risperidone levels and lower starting dose may be warranted

CYP2D6 Considerations

- How to identify metabolizer status
 - Genetic testing
 - CYP2D6 pharmacogenomic assays – not routine everywhere
 - Clinical clues
 - Unexpected side effects → possible poor metabolizer
 - Reduced efficacy/early relapse → possible rapid metabolizer
- Clinical Pearl
 - In practice, CYP2D6 status is rarely tested upfront – dose adjustments are usually guided by clinical response and drug-drug interactions

Geriatric Population

- Increased sensitivity to extrapyramidal symptoms, orthostasis and sedation
- Age related renal decline
 - Impacts paliperidone clearance
- Prefer lower doses, slower titration
- Monitor cognition, fall risk

Beers Criteria

- Beers Criteria
 - All antipsychotics (oral, injectable) are listed as potentially inappropriate in older adults with dementia due to increased risk of stroke, cognitive decline and mortality
 - Avoid except in FDA approved indications
 - No LAI-specific exclusion, but risks apply across formulations

Antipsychotics, first- (typical) and second- (atypical) generation

Aripiprazole

Haloperidol

Olanzapine

Quetiapine

Risperidone

Others^d

Increased risk of stroke and greater rate of cognitive decline and mortality in persons with dementia. Additional evidence suggests an association of increased risk between antipsychotic medication and mortality independent of dementia.

Avoid, except in FDA-approved indications such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, Parkinson disease psychosis (see Table 3), adjunctive treatment of major depressive disorder, or for short-term use as an antiemetic.

Dose Adjustments in Older Adults

LAI	Geriatric Consideration	Clinical Cue
Aripiprazole Maintena®	Start at 300 mg (instead of 400 mg)	Monitor sedation/akathisia
Haloperidol decanoate	Start at lower end of the conversion range (10 times the daily oral dose)	Monitor extra pyramidal side-effects (EPS), cognitive effects
Paliperidone Sustenna®	Use lower initiation dose (78 mg) if renal decline present	Monitor QTc; metabolic effects
Risperidone Consta®	Consider 12.5 mg every 2 weeks (instead of 25 mg)	Orthostasis, EPS more likely

The Role of Pharmacists in Long-Acting Injectable Antipsychotics

- All LAI antipsychotics must be administered by a healthcare professional
- Access & Barriers
 - LAI use remains low (6.5% in Canada vs 15-80% internationally)
 - Patients face barriers including transportation, limited availability of prescribers and stigma
- Pharmacist Impact
 - Accessible (community-based, extended hours)
 - Trusted relationships with patients on complex medications
 - Can address adherence gaps and improve continuity

Injection Site Considerations-Deltoid vs Gluteal?

Feature	Deltoid	Gluteal
Drug Levels	Reaches higher blood levels early (~20 to 30% faster than gluteal) leading to a faster onset	Slower absorption; drug levels rise more gradually
Patient Comfort	Easier access, less clothing removal, many patients prefer	May cause less local tenderness/pain
Feasibility in Clinic/Pharmacy	Fits workflow better (quicker, easier, positioning, more privacy)	Less practical in outpatient settings; requires more space/positioning

Assessment Question 3

GS is a 29-year-old male with schizophrenia who has experienced multiple hospitalizations due to psychotic relapses. He has a history of non-adherence to oral risperidone and lives with his supportive parents. His labs are currently within normal limits, BMI is 28 kg/m², and he has no significant medical comorbidities. He expresses frustration with daily oral medications and is interested in transitioning to a LAI antipsychotic.

If GS were to develop moderate renal impairment (e.g., eGFR < 50 mL/min/1.73m²), which of the following LAI antipsychotics would be least appropriate due to its primary route of elimination?

- A. Aripiprazole
- B. Haloperidol Decanoate
- C. Olanzapine Pamoate
- D. Paliperidone Palmitate

Identify the available long-acting injectable antipsychotics and how their pharmacokinetic properties influence clinical use.

Compare long-acting injectable antipsychotics to their oral counterparts in terms of patient level outcomes.

Recognize patient-specific factors that influence the selection and initiation of long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

Select treatment plans for patients utilizing long-acting injectable antipsychotics.

First Time LAI Use (New Start)

Switching From Oral to LAI

Restarting Therapy

Treatment failure

Switching Between LAI Formulation

Determining the Need for Oral Overlap

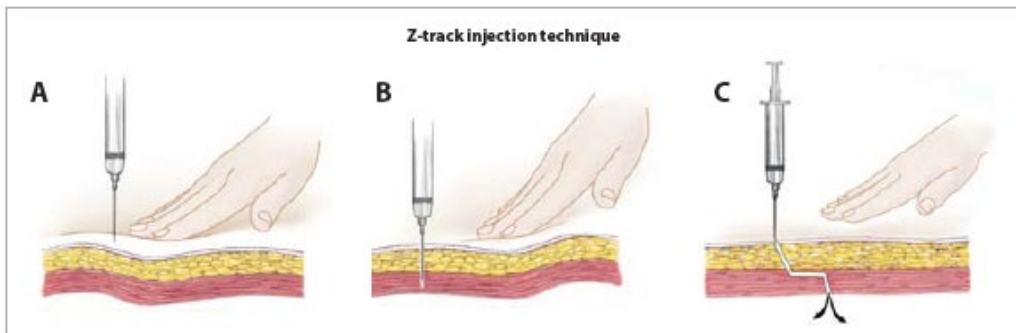
- Confirm oral tolerability before injection
- Check agent specific initiation regimen and time to therapeutic levels
- Use oral overlap if LAI has delayed release or no rapid loading option
- Patient specific factors may push providers towards overlap or different LAI choices
 - Patient adherence, history of relapse, renal/hepatic impairment

Assess Tolerability Prior to LAI Initiation

- 2 weeks to assess tolerability
 - Aripiprazole (Aristada®, Abilify Maintena®)
- No timeline given to assess tolerability
 - Olanzapine Pamoate (Zyprexa Relprevv®), Paliperidone (Sustenna®, Trinza®, Hafyera®), Risperdal (Consta®, Perseris®)
- No guideline/manufacturer recommendations: fluphenazine decanoate, haloperidol decanoate

Pearls for Administering

- Injection site
 - Lumping at the site of injection
 - Injection site reaction – most common side effect is pain
 - Ventrogluteal preferred over dorsogluteal to avoid sciatic nerve
 - Deltoid often preferred by patients
- Rotate injection sites to reduce lipohypertrophy
 - Z-track injection method for haloperidol



Points for Providers

- Monitoring:
 - Metabolic monitoring (see table)
 - Movement disorders every clinic visits: Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS)
 - Agranulocytosis after first initiation, then annually
 - Absolute neutrophil count (discontinue if ANC < 1000 cells/ μ L)
 - Prolonged QTc after initiation in patients with family history or known risk for QT prolongation

	Baseline	4 Weeks	8 Weeks	12 Weeks	6 Months	Annually
Weight/body mass index ^b	X	X	X	X	X	X
Fasting plasma glucose/hemoglobin A1c ^c	X			X	X	X
Lipids	X			X	X	X
Blood pressure	X			X	X	X

Points for Providers

- Boxed warning on antipsychotics: increased risk of death in older adults with dementia-related psychosis
- Olanzapine pamoate (Zyprexa Relprevv®) has a 3 hour post-injection monitoring for delirium/sedation risk

Points for Patients

- Benefits of LAI
- Medication coverage
- Adherence and follow-up
- Discuss side effects
 - Movement disorders, anticholinergic side effects, sedation, metabolic changes (weight, lipids), prolactin elevation

Side Effect Profile

	Sedation	EPS	Anticholinergic	Orthostasis	Weight Gain	Prolactin
Aripiprazole	+	+/++	+	+	+	+
Fluphenazine	+	++++	+	+	+	++++
Haloperidol	+	++++	+	+	+	++++
Olanzapine	++	++	++	++	++++	+
Paliperidone	+	++	+	+	++	++++
Risperidone	+	++	+	++	++	++++

Switching from Oral to LAI

- Assess adherence and clinical stability on oral therapy
 - Confirm symptom control
 - Assess side effects: anaphylaxis, movement disorders (tremors, stiffness), metabolic disorder (weight gain, cholesterol, increase in blood glucose), drowsiness
- Conversion strategy
 - Direct switch or overlap option
 - Tapering option

Restarting Therapy

- No guidelines or package insert information for restarting for: haloperidol decanoate, fluphenazine decanoate, olanzapine pamoate (Zyprexa Relprevv®), risperidone (Risperdal Consta® & Risperdal Perseris®)
- Please refer to package insert for restarting therapy information

Restarting Therapy

- Aripiprazole lauroxil (Aristada®)

Dose of patient's last Aristada® injection	Length of time since last injection		
441 mg	≤ 6 weeks	> 6 and ≤ 7 weeks	>7 weeks
662 mg	≤ 8 weeks	> 8 and ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks
882 mg	≤ 8 weeks	> 8 and ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks
1064 mg	≥ 10 weeks	> 10 and ≤ 12 weeks	>12 weeks
Dosage and administration for re-initiation of Aristada®	No supplementation required	Supplement with a single dose of Aristada Initio®	Re-initiate with a single dose of Aristada® Initio and single dose of oral aripiprazole 30 mg

Treatment Failures

- Assessing failure can fall into 3 categories
 - Treatment resistance:
 - Three treatment periods in 5 years with antipsychotics with at least 2 different chemical classes
 - No period of good functioning within the preceding 5 years
 - Pseudo-resistance: lack of response to treatment not attributed to pharmacological inefficiency, but depending on modifiable and non-modifiable factors such as non-adherence
 - Non-adherence: some or none of the prescribed medication is taken

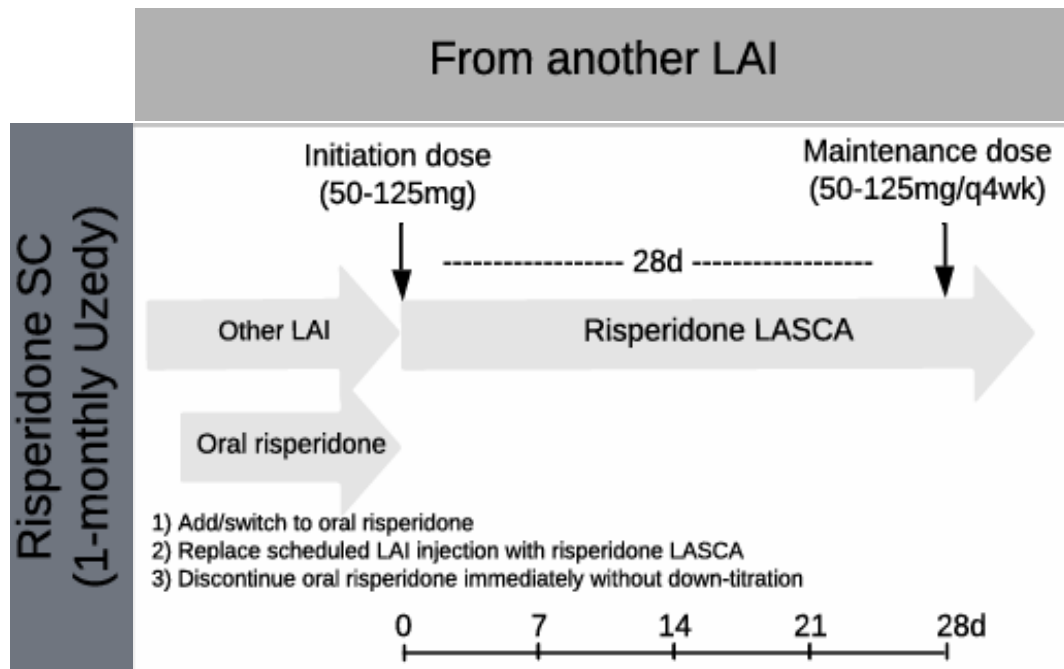
Reducing Treatment Failures

- Drivers of non-adherence
 - Younger age, poor illness insight, substance misuse, severe positive symptoms (paranoia, hostility), negative attitude about medications
- Protective factors
 - Positive patient/family attitudes toward medication
 - Family/social involvement and support
 - Better illness insight
- Interventions to reduce treatment failure
 - Family therapy
 - Psychoeducation
 - Motivational interviewing and trauma informed care
 - Reminders on taking medication
 - Close monitoring for higher risk groups (younger patients, active cannabis use)

Switching Between LAI Formulations

- Limited research as switching between LAI's is not part of the FDA approval process
- Switching is based off pharmacological properties of the drug and the clinical experience
- Before switching ensure
 - The initial antipsychotic medication has been optimized
 - Patient has been treated for an adequate amount of time
 - Patient is adherent to the therapy
- The new drug should be determined based on the reason for the switch: adverse effects, dosing regimen, patient/provider preference
- Not recommended to have a drug-free period when switching due to the risk of relapse
- Direct switch for oral: stop first drug and start second drug next day
- Cross titration for oral: taper first medication, while introducing second

Switching Between LAIs



Assessment Question 4

GS is a 29-year-old male with schizophrenia who has experienced multiple hospitalizations due to psychotic relapses. He has a history of non-adherence to oral risperidone and lives with his supportive parents. His labs are currently within normal limits, BMI is 28 kg/m², and he has no significant medical comorbidities. He expresses frustration with daily oral medications and is interested in transitioning to a LAI antipsychotic.

Which of the following treatment approaches best addresses GS's clinical needs and supports long-term adherence?

- A. Initiate haloperidol decanoate and recommend switching injection sites monthly to reduce lipohypertrophy.
- B. Begin oral risperidone to assess tolerability, initiate risperidone (Risperdal Consta®) with oral overlap, and involve family in adherence support and psychoeducation.
- C. Start olanzapine (Zyprexa Relprevv®) and monitor GS for 3 hours post-injection to assess sedation risk.
- D. Continue oral risperidone while implementing motivational interviewing and family-based therapy to improve adherence before considering LAI.

Conclusions

1. LAI antipsychotics are depot formulations used to improve adherence and outcomes in conditions such as bipolar disorder and schizophrenia by providing sustained drug release, reducing relapse, and requiring specific PK considerations, formulation technologies, and oral overlap protocols for optimal therapeutic effect.
2. LAI antipsychotics have shown to improve adherence, reduce hospitalizations and emergency visits, lower healthcare costs, and enhance quality of life for patients with schizophrenia.
3. LAI antipsychotics reduce treatment discontinuation and hospitalization risk, while addressing challenges like missed doses, metabolic, and PK considerations, organ function, geriatric dosing, and the critical role of pharmacists in optimizing therapy.
4. Most guidance on initiating and restarting LAI antipsychotics is found in the package insert; transitioning between LAI therapies often requires careful planning, including oral overlap for tolerability assessment and a thorough understanding of each agent's PK to ensure a safe and effective switch.

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