

Medications for Mental Illness

Presented by
Anthony Santucci, RN



Learning Objectives

- Noncompliance issues
- General overview of psychiatric medications
- Medication nomenclature
- Antidepressants, Mood stabilizers, Antipsychotics, Antianxiety and Psychostimulants
- Questions from the audience?

So you think you're a police officer?



Noncompliance

- They don't believe they need them
- They "feel better" and stop taking them
- They can't stand the side effects
- They run out and can't navigate the system to get another prescription
- They can't afford them
- Lost or stolen....

What are psychiatric medications?

- Medications are designed to control symptoms of the disorder
- Medications will not cure the disease
- Psychiatric medications have an effect on chemicals, called neurotransmitters, located in the brain
- Patients respond differently to different medications...there is no magic bullet

Medication Nomenclature

All medications have three names representing the same medication:

- Brand Name
- Generic Name
- Chemical name

Example: Excedrin, Aspirin, acetylsalicylic acid

Antidepressant Medications

- Used to alleviate symptoms of depression: loss of energy, feelings of hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, difficulty thinking or concentrating, disruption of sleep pattern, lost of interest or pleasure in activities.
- May take over a month to for the patient to start to feel the benefits of medication.

Types of Antidepressants

- MAOI inhibitors: Nardil, Parnate
- Tricyclics: Elavil, Pamelor, Sinequan
- SSRIs: Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, Celexa, Lexapro
- Other: Desyrel, Wellbutrin, Serzone

**SSRIs are the most commonly prescribed

Side effects of antidepressants

- Irritability, headaches, difficulty sleeping, drowsiness, weight gain, upset stomach, low blood pressure, increased risk of seizures, sexual dysfunction
- May induce a manic episode or psychosis in some patients

Mood Stabilizer Medications

- Used to alleviate racing thoughts, severe mood swings, pressured speech, impaired judgment, decreased need for sleep, poor impulse control and hypersexuality

Types of Mood Stabilizers

- Lithium: Eskalith, Lithobid
- Anticonvulsants: Depakote, Tegretol, Neurontin, Lamictal
- Zyprexa is now being used for mood stabilization

Side effects of mood stabilizers

- Fine tremor of the hands, sedation, feeling dizzy, slurred speech, nausea, gastrointestinal problems, confusion
- Lithium has a smaller therapeutic range than the others and therefore one may become “toxic” on lithium easily. Lithium toxicity presents similar to alcohol intoxication.

Antipsychotic Medications

- Used to alleviate symptoms of psychosis such as hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, thought disorders, disorganized behaviors, impaired social functioning and aggression.
- Newer generation antipsychotic medications work both on positive and negative symptoms of psychosis.
- May take multiple doses to achieve effect.

Types of Antipsychotics

- Old generation: Haldol, Thorazine, Mellaril, Navane, Loxitane, Stelazine, Trilafon, Prolixin
- Newer generation: Clozaril, Risperdal, Zyprexa/Zydis, Seroquel, Geodon, Abilify
- Haldol and Prolixin are available in long acting injections (two weeks to one month duration)

Side effects of Antipsychotics

- Sedation, weight gain, excessive saliva, stiff muscles, restlessness, sexual dysfunction, sun sensitivity
- EPS: akathisia, involuntary twitching, twisting, prolonged muscle contractions that cause repetitive movements or abnormal posture
- Tardive Dyskinesia: abnormal movements which never go away/get better

Side effects of Antipsychotics...

- Life threatening side effects: neuroleptic malignant syndrome, agranulocytosis
- There are some medications that are taken with antipsychotics that may decrease side effects: cogentin, artane, benadryl. Of course, these medications also have side effects of their own.....

Antianxiety Medications

- Used to alleviate strong/overwhelming fears, repeating thoughts/ritualistic behavior, excessive worrying, rapid breathing and heartbeat, nervous stomach.
- Does not need to build levels to be effective.
- Used in acute care settings to assist a violent and/or out of control patient in calming down.

Types of Antianxiety Medications

- Benzodiazepines: Valium, Xanax, Librium, Ativan, Klonopin, Serax

benzodiazepines are highly addictive

- Non-benzodiazepines: Buspar, Vistaril, Atarax

Side effects of Antianxiety Medication

- Reduced social inhibition, aggressive impulses, sedation, memory difficulties, lack of coordination, sexual difficulty
- **ADDICTION** is the biggest problem with this class of medication

Psychostimulant Medications

- Used to alleviate symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder such as inability to concentrate, hyperactivity and/or impulsivity, difficulty sleeping.
- Usually prescribed for children and adolescents, however may be used by adults.

Types of Psychostimulants

- Ritalin, Adderal, Dexadrine, Concerta, Strattera
- Some come in long acting formulas
- Medications act as stimulants, which actually work to “calm” the patient. How?

Side effects of Psychostimulants

- Loss of appetite and weight, irritability and agitation as medicine wears off, tics, lowered seizure threshold, difficulty sleeping, sun sensitivity, dry mouth
- This class of medications are also addictive and there is a possibility of abuse

Conclusions

- Noncompliance with prescribed medications is an issue with many disorders, not just mental illness.
- How many of you have missed doses of pills? Stopped taking antibiotics when you felt better? Took more than the recommended dose of a medication to get it to work faster/better? Skipped a doctor appointment because you were too busy?

Questions

Questions from the
audience???

