Psychotropic Medication

Practical Information For Professional Helpers

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What Are Psychotropic Medications

- Psychotropic drugs is a term used to describe medications that alter chemical levels in the brain which impact mood and behavior.
- Typically these drugs interact with the release and reuptake or absorption of neurotransmitters in the brain and central nervous system.
Neurotransmitters In Action

Synapse

- axon
- synaptic vesicles
- synapse
- neurotransmitter
- dendrites
- receptor

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What Are Neurotransmitters?

- Norepinephrine
- Serotonin
- Dopamine
- Gamma amino-butyric acid (GABA)
- Acetylcholine
- Glutamate
Neurotransmitters Control...

- Anxiety
- Mood
- Learning
- Memory
- Appetite
- Sleep
- Pain
- Pleasure
- Anger
- Aggression
Disorders Related to Imbalance

- Anxiety
- PTSD
- OCD
- Mood Disorders
- Depression
- Bipolar
- ADHD
- Psychotic spectrum disorder
Types of Anxiety Disorders

- Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)
- Social phobia
- Panic disorder
- Agoraphobia
- Adjustment Disorder (AD)
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

- Chronic condition, often incapacitating, characterized by persistent thoughts and compulsions.

I have CDO
it’s like OCD
but all the letters are in alphabetical order
AS THEY SHOULD BE
Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

- Developed after surviving unusual and severe mental or physical trauma. Person may feel fear, helplessness, or that they are in danger.
Types of Anxiety Medication

- SSRIs
- Benzodiazepines
Antianxiety Medication

- **SSRIs**
  - Zoloft (sertraline)
  - Paxil (paroxetine)
  - Prozac (fluoxetine)
  - Anafranil (clomipramine)
  - Luvox (fluvoxamine)
Serotonin Gets a Boost

- Regulating mood
- Decreased anxiety
- Regulate sleep and appetite
- Reduce primitive OCD-like urges

Preferred for treatment of OCD
How Safe Are SSRIs?

- Death by overdose is incredibly rare, occurring about two for every one million people using them.
SSRI Side Effects

- Increased anxiety
- Sedation
- Insomnia
- Sexual dysfunction
- Weight gain
Antianxiety Medication

- Benzodiazepines
  - Valium (diazepam)
  - Klonopin (clonazepam)
  - Xanax (alprazolam)
  - Ativan (Lorazepam)
What Do Benzodiazepines Do?

- Acting through the central nervous system
  - Muscle relaxation
  - Sedative
  - Anxiolytic
  - anti convulsant
- Do not repress obsessions in OCD
Benzodiazepine Side Effects

- Significant risk for dependence
- Dangerous overdose risk when mixed with alcohol
- Drowsiness, dizziness, potential for physical and psychological dependence
Antianxiety Medication Mixed with Alcohol and other Drugs

- Dangerous to mix benzodiazepines with alcohol
- Alcohol use with SSRIs may cause dangerously high levels of serotonin
  - “serotonin syndrome”
- Certain drugs may increase the toxicities of SSRIs
  - MDMA, Sudafed, Ambien, LSD
- Some evidence marijuana negatively impacts antianxiety meds
Mood Disorders
Types Of Depression

- Unipolar depression is synonymous with clinical depression and major depressive disorder.
Types Of Depression

• Atypical depression is the most common and typically coexists with an anxiety disorder.
• Dysthymic depression differs from Unipolar depression in that the symptoms are long lasting and milder.
Types of Medications

- Cyclics
- NRIs
- SSRIs
- SNRIs
Antidepressants: Cyclics

- Tofranil (imipramine)
- Elavil (amitriptyline)
- Anafranil (clomipramine)
- Desyrel (trazodone)
Antidepressants:
What Do Cyclics Do?

- Cyclics increase effectiveness of both serotonin and norepinephrine
  - Decreased anxiety
  - Decreased anger/aggression
  - Increase positive feelings
  - Increased ability to learn and concentrate
Antidepressants: NRIs

- Strattera (atomoxetine)
- Vestra (reboxetine)
- Remeron (mirtazapine)
Antidepressants: What Do NRIs Do?

- NRIs increase effectiveness of norepinephrine.
  - Provide an energy boost and increase attention span
  - Decrease anxiety
  - Increased positive feelings
Antidepressants: SSRIs

- Prozac (fluoxetine)
- Zoloft (sertraline)
- Paxil (paroxetine)
- Celexa (citalopram)
- Lexapro (escitalopram)
- Luvox (fluvoxamine)
Antidepressants: A Review Of SSRIs

- SSRIs selectively increase effectiveness of serotonin
  - Decreased anxiety
  - Decreased anger/aggression
  - Increased ability to learn and concentrate

- Dangerous to use Alcohol, MDMA, Sudafed, Ambien, LSD and other drugs with SSRIs
Antidepressants: SNRIs

- Cymbalta (duloxetine)
- Effexor (venlafaxine)
- Pristiq (desvenafaxine)
Antidepressants: What Do SNRIs Do?

- SNRIs increase effectiveness of both serotonin and norepinephrine
  - Decreased anxiety
  - Decreased anger/aggression
  - Increase positive feelings
  - Increased ability to learn and concentrate
Antidepressants: Atypical

- Wellbutrin (bupropion HCL)
- Zyban (bupropion HCL)
- Aplenzin (bupropion hydrobromide)
- Oleptro (trazodone ER)
Antidepressants: What Do Atypicals Do?

- Atypical antidepressants increase effectiveness of both dopamine and norepinephrine
  - Decrease anxiety
  - Increased positive feelings
  - Increased ability to concentrate and learn
  - Increased motivation and desire
  - Increased pleasure
What Do Antidepressants Do?

- Used to restore normal biological functioning.
- Studies suggest that with quality care, the same outcomes may be achieved with a primary care physician as with a psychiatrist.
Side Effects Of Antidepressants

- Cyclics
  - Dangerous in overdose and enhance effects of alcohol, very sedating, dry mouth, constipation, drop in blood pressure, rapid hear rate, weight gain, decreased libido

- Atypical
  - Anxiety and insomnia
Side Effects Of Antidepressants

- SSRIs
  - Increased serotonin activity, weight gain, decreased libido, anxiety, sedation, insomnia

- NRIs
  - Weight gain, rare decreased white blood cell count (Remeron)
Action Times

- How long does it take for Zoloft, Paxil, Effexor, and Wellbutrin to take effect?
  - At least 50% of those who will eventually respond to the above mentioned antidepressants will begin to demonstrate improvement within one week of beginning treatment.
Antidepressants And AOD

- Weed may increase sedation effects of antidepressants.
- Alcohol may counteract effect of antidepressants.
- Alcohol with antidepressants decreases reaction time, mental cognition, coordination.
- Alcohol and MAOIs may cause dangerous spike in blood pressure.
- MAOIs and meth or MDMA should never be mixed.
Are Certain Ethnicities More Likely To Be Depressed Than Others?

- Apparently so...
- Approximately 30% of Hispanics report suffering from depression compared to 26% for whites, 20% for blacks, and 16% for Asians.
Bipolar Disorder

- Characterized by intense mood swings (mania and depression)
- Disruptive behaviors include delusional thinking, binges, recklessness
- Classified as a mood disorder
- Cyclothymia: mood swings lasting at least two years
  - Chronic disorder with less intense mood swings
Mood-Stabilizing Agents

- Anticonvulsants
  - Depakote (divalproex)
  - Lamictal (lamotrigine)
  - Tegretol (carbamazepine)
  - Topamax (topiramate)
Mood-Stabilizing Agents

- Atypical Antipsychotics
  - Zyprexa (olanzapine)
  - Abilify (aripiprazole)
  - Symbyax (fluoxetine)
Lithium

- Lithium reduces suicide risk and attempts.
- Decreases anxiety and manic episodes.
- Lithium commonly causes nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, thirst, weight gain, acne and fine-hand tremors.
- Lithium may pose long term health risks.
What Do Mood-stabilizing Agents Do?

- The exact way remains unclear, perhaps interaction with GABA
  - Decrease mania
  - Decrease disruptive behaviors
  - Stabilize mood
- Depakote may work quicker than Lithium
  - Decreases rapid cycling mania
  - Decreases rage reactions
- Topamax is more effective in treating migraines than as a mood stabilizer.
Side Effects Of Mood-stabilizing Agents

- Depakote may cause sedation, dizziness, drowsiness, blurred vision, and coordination problems.
- Depakote may pose long term health risks.
- Lamictal may cause serious rash development.
Mood Stabilizing Agents And AOD

- Recreational drugs and alcohol may increase bipolar symptoms and severity.
- CNS and respiratory depressant when used with alcohol.
- Caffeine may cause a severe reaction in patient.
- May increase drowsiness, dizziness, and decreased cognition when paired with lithium.
- Potential for severe reactions.
ADHD

• Rates of ADHD in adults fall in the 4% to 5% range.
• Characterized by difficulty focusing, sitting still and often impulsive tendencies.
• 4-9 times more common in boys.
Medication Management Of ADHD

Psychostimulants

- Ritalin (methylphenidate)
- Dexedrine (dextroamphetamine)
- Adderall
- Concerta (methylphenidate)
- Vyvanse (lisdexamfetamin dimesylate)
Medication Management Of ADHD

- **Antidepressants**
  - Wellbutrin (bupropion)

- **Alpha-2 agonists**
  - Catapres (clonidine)
  - Tenex (guanfacine)
What Do ADHD Medications Do?

- Psychostimulants all increase prefrontal cortex levels of norepinephrine and dopamine.
- Psychostimulants have different release times and duration of action times.
- Alpha-2 agonists help control hyperactivity, aggression, and irritability as well as blood pressure.
ADHD And Wellbutrin

- Wellbutrin enhances the actions of norepinephrine and dopamine in the prefrontal cortex.
  - Decrease anxiety
  - Increased positive feelings
  - Increased ability to concentrate and learn
  - Increased motivation and desire
- Wellbutrin carries a possible increased risk for suicide.
Is Wellbutrin Effective In Treating ADHD?

- Yes
  - It is primarily an augmenting agent to psychostimulants which are the mainstay for treating ADHD. Wellbutrin is also effective in treating ADHD with co-morbid depression.
Medication Side Effects

- Psychostimulants may cause insomnia, decrease in appetite, weight loss, and rebound effect.
- Alpha-2 agonists have few side effects. Mild dizziness, headaches, nausea, and depression may occur. Drowsiness is the more common.
Adderall XR vs. Vyvanse

- Is there an advantage to using one over the other?
  - Both provide 10-12 hrs. of coverage. Vyvanse has less risk for abuse intranasally or intravenously since it must be completely absorbed in the GI tract before becoming active.
ADHD Medications And Recreational Drug And Alcohol Use

- Dangerous when used with other stimulants such as meth and cocaine.
- Increased cardiovascular symptoms when used with alcohol.
  - Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- Use of drugs or alcohol with ADHD meds may increase chances for medication abuse.
- Dangerous increase in side effects of recreational drugs and alcohol.
Should Adults Take ADD Drugs?

- Absolutely if there is medical need
  - 70% of those diagnosed with ADD in childhood or adolescents go on to experience symptoms in adulthood. This includes distractibility and inattention throughout their lives.
Psychotic Spectrum Disorders

- Group of disorders including brief psychotic disorder, delusional disorder, schizoaffective disorder, schizophreniform disorder, and schizophrenia.

- High dopamine and low glutamate have been implicated in the development.
Antipsychotics

- Conventional Agents
  - Thorazine (chlorpromazine)
  - Haldol (haloperidol)
  - Navane (thiothixene)
  - Stelazine (trifluperazine)
Antipsychotics

- Atypical Agents
  - Clozaril (clozapine)
  - Risperdal (risperidone)
  - Zyprexa (olanzapine)
  - Seroquel (quetiapine)
  - Geodon (ziprasidone)
  - Abilify (aripiprazole)
  - Invega (paliperidon)
What Do Antipsychotics Do?

- All antipsychotics block dopamine
  - Increase relaxation
  - Less fearful
  - More confident
  - Increased concentration
  - Improved mood
  - Improved sleep patterns
Side Effects Of Antipsychotics

- **Atypical Agents**
  - Common side effects include weight gain, sedation, insomnia, agitation, constipation and dry mouth.
  - Zyprexa and Clozaril have been linked to both Type II diabetes and worse triglyceride and cholesterol levels.
  - Geodon and Abilify have a low risk for diabetes, triglyceride and cholesterol levels.
Psychotropic Medications And Weight Gain

- Many psychiatric medications slow the metabolic rate at which carbohydrates and fats are processed.
- Some medications such as Clozaril and Zyprexa interfere with satiety signals, allowing people to eat and eat with no signal that they are full.