

Psychotropic Medications

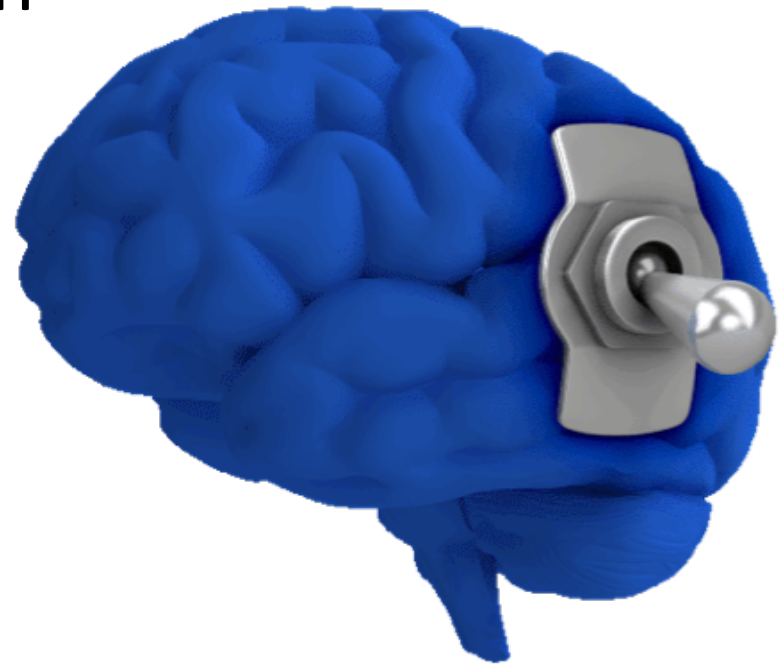
Side Effects Caregivers Should Know About

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Psychotropic Medications

- Psychoactive
- Psychopharmacological
- Medications that have an effect on the mind (e.g., emotions, behavior)



National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): Older Adults

- Should be careful when taking medications, especially when taking many different drugs
- Have a higher risk for drug interactions, unwanted side effects, missing doses, or overdosing
- Tend to be more sensitive to medications
- React to medications differently than younger people because their bodies process and eliminate medications more slowly (even healthy older people)

Primary Classes of Psychotropic Medications

Psychotropic medications are often grouped together by their use/intended action

- Antianxiety agents (anxiolytics)
- Antidepressants
- Antipsychotics (neuroleptics)
- Mood stabilizers
- Sedative-hypnotics (sleep aids)
- Stimulants



Common Antianxiety Agents

(anxiolytics)

- Valium (diazepam)
- Xanax (alprazolam)
- Ativan (lorazepam)

Side effects

- Sleepy/drowsy
- Dizzy
- Dry mouth
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Disinhibition
- Depression
- Incontinence and/or holding in urine and/or constipation
- Difficulty walking

Common Antidepressant Agents

- Prozac (fluoxetine)
- Cymbalta (duloxetine)
- Celexa (citalopram)
- Lexapro (escitalopram)
- Effexor (venlafaxine)
- Remeron (mirtazapine)
- Elavil (amitriptyline)
- Pamelor (nortriptyline)

Side effects

- Stomach upset
- Sleepy/drowsy
- Dizzy
- Blurred vision
- Confusion
- Increased heart rate
- Weight changes
- Seizures
- Suicidal thoughts
- Incontinence and/or holding in urine and/or constipation

Antipsychotics and Psychosis

- **Psychosis** is not a mental disorder, it is a symptom where a person becomes “out of touch” with their environment/reality
- Psychosis can be caused by a physical illness, substance abuse, or extreme stress or trauma
- **Some mental illnesses cause psychosis**, like schizophrenia
- Always question the diagnosis of a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia that starts late in life, especially if an antipsychotic is prescribed

Common Antipsychotic Agents

- Haldol (haloperidol)
- Risperdal (risperidone)
- Abilify (aripiprazole)
- Clozaril (clozapine)
- Geodon (ziprasidone)
- Latuda (lurasidone)
- Risperdal (risperidone)
- Saphris (asenapine)
- Seroquel (quetiapine)
- Zyprexa (olanzapine)

Side effects

- Sleepy/drowsy
- Dizzy/blood pressure drop when changing positions
- Blurred vision
- Dry mouth
- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Weight changes/fluid retention
- High blood sugar
- Seizures
- Incontinence and/or holding in urine and/or constipation

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Even Worse Side effects

- Tremors
- Trouble moving limbs/walking (looks like Parkinson's disease)
- Tardive dyskinesia (permanent alteration in the ability to move)
- Increased **risk of death** in elderly persons with dementia (e.g., stroke)

Antipsychotic Side Effects in More Detail

- Tardive dyskinesia (permanent involuntary movements of tongue, mouth, face, trunk, arms and legs; occurs with “older/typical” and “newer/atypical antipsychotics)
- Metabolic Syndrome (excess weight gain, increased blood pressure, high blood sugar, and cholesterol)
- Neuroleptic malignant syndrome - medical emergency (extreme muscle stiffness, high fever, sweating, tremors, confusion, unstable blood pressure, and heart rate).

Common Agents Used as Mood Stabilizers

- Mood stabilizers (some are anti-seizure medications)
 - Depakote (divalproex)
 - Depakene (valproic acid, valproate)
 - Tegretol (carbamazepine)
 - Lithobid (lithium)

Side effects

Dizziness
Drowsiness
Blurred vision
Nausea/vomiting
Constipation
Electrolyte imbalances
Serious rashes
Blood disorders
Liver problems
(e.g., yellowing of eyes, skin)

Mood Stabilizer: Signs of Lithium Toxicity

- Repeated vomiting/diarrhea
- Severe tremors
- Difficulty walking/unable to walk
- Poor coordination
- Extreme sleepiness
- Slurred speech/difficulty sleeping
- Blurred vision/ringing in ears
- Unable to control eyes going in circles
- Muscle twitching
- Seizures



Common Sedative-Hypnotic Agents

- Ambien (zolpidem)
- Lunesta (eszopiclone)
- Restoril (temazepam)

Side effects

- Dizziness
- Daytime drowsiness
- Incoordination
- Impaired ability to think
- Incontinence and/or holding in urine and/or constipation
- Lethargy
- Blurred vision
- Unusual behaviors
- Amnesia
- Hallucinations



Common Agents Used as Stimulants

- Adderall (dextroamphetamine/amphetamine)
- Ritalin or Concerta (methylphenidate)
- Provigil (modafinil)
- Nuvigil (armodafinil)

Side effects

- Trouble sleeping
- Dry mouth
- Increased blood pressure
- Decreased appetite/weight loss
- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Jitteriness
- Social withdrawal
- Tics, sudden repetitive movements or sounds
- Aggressive behavior or hostility
- Psychotic or manic symptoms

Resources for Caregivers

- National Institute on Aging Caregiver Website:
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving>
- National Institute on Mental Health Older Adults and Mental Health Website:
<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/older-adults-and-mental-health/index.shtml>

Comments or suggestions?

Thank You

please
take our
Survey



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