


Medication for Mental Health Conditions

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What I'll Talk About

- Where am I from?
- How do drugs work?
- Antidepressants
- Anxiolytics and Hypnotics
- Antipsychotics
- Mood stabilisers
- Any Questions?



Medications used in mental health conditions

- Antidepressants; e.g. fluoxetine, citalopram, mirtazapine, duloxetine
- Hypnotics and anxiolytics; e.g. temazepam, diazepam, lorazepam
- Antipsychotics; e.g. haloperidol, olanzapine, risperidone, quetiapine, amisulpride
- Mood Stabilisers; e.g. lithium, valproate

How do Medications work?

- Most medicines are taken by mouth
- Taken by mouth they dissolve in the stomach or intestine and then get absorbed into the blood stream
- The blood carries the drug around the body, passing through the liver and kidneys
- Most medicines are metabolised (broken down) by the liver and/or kidney

Where do medicines work?

- The blood carries the medicine to its site of action
- This will change with different sorts of illnesses
- Most mental health illnesses originate from the brain- so the medicines we use act there
- Side-effects often happen because the medicine works in other places as well as the brain

Injections

- The drug is usually injected into a muscle
- The drug is quickly absorbed into the blood and can work much quicker e.g. some antibiotics
- Some injections are designed to stay in the muscle and release the drug slowly - depot antipsychotics
- Other routes of injection e.g. into the vein, under the skin are used in other illnesses

Antidepressants

- Many different groups – SSRIs, Tricyclic, SNRI, NASSA, NARI
- SSRIs – most commonly used. sertraline, fluoxetine, citalopram
- Other antidepressants e.g. mirtazapine, venlafaxine, duloxetine. Usually used when SSRIs are not effective or people have too many side effects
- Antidepressants are not usually used for mild depression - other treatments work as well - eg. exercise, cognitive behavioural therapy
- In moderate to severe depression antidepressant therapy is usually required
- Start to work after 1-2 weeks, need to take for usually 6 – 9 months or longer
- Not addictive but discontinuation symptoms can occur on stopping treatment

Hypnotics

- Hypnotics are used as sleeping tablets
- They should not be used regularly, or for long periods of time as they can stop working as well and can be addictive
- Other methods of helping sleep should always be tried - sleep hygiene
- Temazepam, nitrazepam, zopiclone, zolpidem

Anxiolytics

- These are used to calm and relax people who become agitated/very anxious
- They are also used to treat aggressive outbursts
- Most drugs that are used are benzodiazepines - their use is carefully monitored and controlled
- Diazepam, chlordiazepoxide, lorazepam, oxazepam

Typical antipsychotics

- Traditional/older (typical) antipsychotics
- Very effective but balanced against many side effects
- Most common are problems movement disorders, dry mouth, drowsiness, weight gain and hormone problems
- Many are also available as injections
- Chlorpromazine, flupentixol, fluphenazine, haloperidol, pimozide, sulpiride, zuclopenthixol, trifluoperazine

Atypical antipsychotics

- Newer antipsychotics – different side effects to the typical antipsychotics:
 - Weight gain
 - Problems with glucose control
 - Affect levels of prolactin (a hormone)
- Olanzapine, risperidone, quetiapine, amisulpride, paliperidone and aripiprazole.
- Clozapine has been found to be very effective in patients where other drugs have not worked, but does have some problematic side effects that require monitoring

Choice of antipsychotic

- Different people respond differently to different antipsychotics - no one antipsychotic suits all
- Many people stop taking their antipsychotic medication which can lead to their symptoms worsening
 - Talk to your doctor/nurse
 - Have any been tried before and what type?
 - What are the most problematic side effects?
 - Which drug is most likely to be taken?
 - Which is preferred - tablets or injections?

Mood stabilisers

- Different types of medication are used as mood stabilisers:
 - Lithium
 - Antipsychotics
 - Antiepileptics

Lithium

- Very effective
- Used in bipolar affective disorder
- Also used in depression
- Need regular blood tests to check the amount in the body is correct level
- Important to take as prescribed - not to take too much or too little
- Can be used to prevent and treat illness - but takes a couple of weeks to work
- Should not be stopped suddenly
- Take care when buying medicines (go to a chemist and tell them you are on it)

Antipsychotics

- Quetiapine, risperidone, olanzapine, aripiprazole have a license for mania and/or maintenance treatment
- Often these are used together with another mood stabiliser
- The side effects seen are the same as if used for psychotic illnesses

Anti epileptics

- Some medications used to treat epilepsy are also used as mood stabilisers
- Sodium Valproate/Semisodium Valproate (Epilim/Depakote)
- Carbamazepine
- Lamotrigine
- These medicines are often used together with another drug.

Side effects

- All medication can have side effects
- Seek help if concerned
- Information on side effects is available

Interactions

- Medication can interact with other medication
 - Other prescribed medication
 - Medication bought over the counter
 - Herbal medicines and supplements
 - Alcohol
 - Smoking
 - Drugs of abuse

Resources

- www.choiceandmedication.org.uk/coventry-and-warwickshire
- CWPT Helpline
- Patient information leaflet provided with medication

Any Questions?