



Providing Mental Health, Mental Retardation
and Substance Abuse Services

Pharmacology 101

*Cobb and Douglas Counties
Community Services Boards*

Contraindication

Any symptom or circumstance that makes treatment with a drug unsafe or inappropriate. For example: glaucoma, liver disease

Side Effect

Any pharmacologic but unintended action of a drug.

Example: Morphine is for pain, however, may cause constipation, nausea/vomiting, and drowsiness as a side effect.

Drug – Food Interaction

Certain foods may alter the metabolism of a medication. For example grapefruit juice has a large effect on BuSpar and Statins (Cholesterol Medication)

Risks Associated with Pregnancy

Taking certain medication during pregnancy may cause birth defects. For example Lithium can cause cardiac problems and Depakote can cause Spinal Bifida.

Laboratory Monitoring

Can be performed with certain medications to monitor for response, compliance and the potential for toxicity. This is important for Lithium and Depakote.

Alternatives to the Use of Medication

A few are herbal remedies, nutrition, therapy, and hypnosis.

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor (SSRIs)

Uses: Depression, Bipolar, Obsessive
Compulsive Disorder, Anxiety & Panic
Disorders, Bulimia

SSRIs Side Effects:

Minor or Common –anxiety or nervousness, tremor or shaking, upset stomach, diarrhea or constipation, blurred vision, headache, changes in appetite and weight, sweating, flushing, stuffy nose and yawning.

SSRIs Side Effects:

Serious –agitation or restlessness, nausea, vomiting, insomnia, palpitations, skin rash, hives, difficulty breathing, tingling or numbness, seizure. Prozac can also cause flu-like symptoms.

Anti-Anxiety Medications

Uses: Anxiety and Panic
Disorders

Anti-Anxiety Medications

Side Effects:

Minor or Common – dizziness, drowsiness, clumsiness, unsteady balance, headache, confusion, difficulty remembering, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, change in appetite, dry mouths

Anti-Psychotics

Uses: Psychotic Disorders,
Schizophrenia, Bipolar, Tourettes
or Tic Disorders

Anti-Psychotics

Side Effects:

Minor or Common – drowsiness, depression, feeling “out-of-sorts, constipation, nausea or vomiting, weight gain, skin rash, increased sensitivity to sunlight, menstrual irregularities.

Importance of Taking Medication Control or absence of symptoms

Improved quality of life

Relationship / friends

Family

Employment / Work

Play / Relax

Spiritual

*Medication non-adherence can
mean the following:*

Not taking any medication

Not taking correctly

Taking other medications not
prescribed

What prevents people from taking medication?

Duration, complexity, severity of illness (nature of mental disorder) lack of trust, doubts & stigma attached to mental illness
Lack of support (social, economic) & attitude of family & friends. Tolerability of medication (distressing physical side effects) & effectiveness (consumer's satisfaction of care).

What prevents people from taking medication?

Cost of medication, worried about addiction
lack of transportation (both to appointments
& pharmacy) Belief system (sign of
“weakness” or sign of being “crazy” or feels
can master the illness without medication)
or consumer’s non-acceptance of diagnosis
and need for treatment

What prevents people from taking medication?

Not understanding instructions (written or verbal) or lack of knowledge about medication. Religious beliefs, memory impairment, stressful & disorganized life.

Non-adherence to Medication Prescription

Medication non-adherence is a significant factor in the recurrence of psychiatric symptoms and a leading cause of frequent hospitalizations (Azrin & Teichner, 1998).

Non-adherence to Medication Prescription

Estimated range from 30% to 60%

Anti-psychotic medication is 58% with a range 24% to 90%

Antidepressant medication is 63% with a range of 40% to 90%

Cardiovascular medication 50% to 70%

Signs of non-adherence:

No or slight improvement, missed
Appointments, relapse of symptoms
(evaluate mental status) ↓ Pharmacy refills

Strategies to improve adherence:

Provide medication education, assessing medication effectiveness, team collaborating for medication planning, engage consumers in treatment, electronic record review, direct observation

Quiz

1. Certain foods may alter drug metabolism. T or F
2. Taking certain medications during pregnancy has the potential to cause birth defects. T or F
3. There are no medications for the treatment of Anxiety and Panic Disorders T or F
4. Some people don't take their medication, because of their Religious beliefs T or F
5. A good way to help consumers to take their medication is through education? T or F