



# Psychoactive Medications

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# PSYCHOACTIVE MEDICATIONS

## Definition:

**Any medication which has the capability to alter mood, anxiety, behavior or cognitive processes; usually denotes drugs used in the treatment of mental illness**

# Reasons for Prescribing

## Changing One's Internal Experience

- Improve performance
- Pleasure and relaxation
- Sleep
- To decrease worry
- Sadness
- Out of control
- Pain relief

# OTC Psychoactive Medications

- **Alcohol**
- **Nicotine**
- **Caffeine/No Doz**
- **Marijuana**
- **Antihistamines**
- **Cold Medications**
- **Diet Pills**
- **Tylenol/NSAIDS/Aspirin**
- **Codeine/Heroin**

# General Classes of Medications

## Antidepressants

- Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRI)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (TCA)
- Wellbutrin

# General Classes of Medications

## Anti-anxiety

- Benzodiazepines
- Buspar
- Beta-blockers
- Tricyclic antidepressants
- Antiepileptic drugs

# General Classes of Medications

## Mood Stabilizers

- Lithium
- Antiepileptic Drugs

# General Classes of Medications

## Antipsychotics

- Zyprexa
- Risperidone
- Seroquel
- Geodon
- Haldol
- Mellaril/Thorazine



# General Classes of Medications

## Sedative – Hypnotics

- Restoril
- Ambien
- Trazodone
- Benadryl
- Chloral hydrate
- Ativan

# Factors Affecting Dosage and Administration

- Age
- Medical conditions
- Amount of time the body takes to metabolize the drug
- Route
- Hydration



# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

- **Minimize side effects**
- **PRN medications**
- **Maintain therapeutic levels**
- **“Windows”**
- **Absorption**



# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

## Minimize Side Effects

- Take after meals or with food to decrease stomach upset
- Take at night if it causes drowsiness
- Take in the morning if it causes inability to sleep

# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

## PRN Medications

- **Efficacy: speed of onset, duration**
- **Classes of drugs**
  - Pain control
  - Constipation
  - Nausea/Vomiting
  - Allergies
  - Status Epilepticus



# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

## Maintain Therapeutic Levels

- Metabolism of the drug
- Antibiotics/Antifungal
- Multiple doses vs. once a day dosing

# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

## “Window” of time

- Usually one hour before, to one hour after, the medication is ordered to be given
- Likelihood of decrease in therapeutic levels if given outside of these times

# Factors Affecting Time of Administration

## Absorption

- Routes of administration are not therapeutically interchangeable (e.g. Valium is easily absorbed orally but slower and erratic when given IM)
- Absorption can be slower when taken with food, milk or milk products
- The elderly have more difficulty absorbing medications D/T a decrease in GI acid secretions and slower motility thru the GI tract



# Potential Implications of Missed Doses

- Compliance Issues
- Liability Issues
- Need to maintain therapeutic levels



# Side Effects of Medications

- **Dry Mouth**
- **Skin Reactions**
- **Blood Abnormalities**
- **CNS Disturbances**
- **GI Upset**
- **Difficulty Urinating**
- **Liver Involvement**

# Side Effects of Medications

- **Changes in Blood Pressure**
- **Weight Gain or Loss**
- **Addiction**
- **Tremors**
- **Water Intoxication**
- **Prolonged Seizures**
- **Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome**

# Side Effects of Medications

## Involuntary Movements

- Akathisia
- Acute Dystonia
- Extrapiramidal Symptoms
- Tardive Dyskinesia

# Conclusions

- **Psychotropic medications should be used to improve an individual's functioning and quality of life.**
- **Medications should be used in conjunction with other therapies.**

# Conclusions

- **“Start low and go slow”.**
- **Monitor regularly for side effects and need for usage.**
- **Don’t continue to administer unneeded drugs (“first do no harm”).**

# Psychoactive Medications

## Sources for questions:

- **Continuum of Care**  
<http://star.nm.org/coc>
- **WebMD** [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)
- **IntelliHealth** [www.intellihealth.com](http://www.intellihealth.com)
- **MedicineNet**  
<http://www.medicinenet.com>
- **Others?....**