Psychiatric Disorders and Psychotropic Medications Used for Treatment

Psychiatric disorders may involve serious impairments in mental or emotional functioning which affect a person’s ability to perform normal activities and to relate effectively to others. Many individuals with developmental disabilities who also have a psychiatric disorder, and individuals who have been diagnosed with a mental illness, are treated with psychotropic medications in conjunction with other interventions. Psychotropic medications are central nervous system drugs that affect mental activity, behavior, or perception. The following information is on three classifications of psychiatric disorders for which individuals might take medication.

1. Mood Disorders
One type of mood disorder is Depression (lasting two or more weeks), which can mean feelings of hopelessness or even self-destruction; for example, not wanting to eat or get out of bed in the morning. Anti-depressants are used to treat depression. Anti-depressant medications include:
- Tofranil
- Norpramin
- Wellbutrin
- SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors—a new class of medications) Include:
  - Luvox (fluvoxamine)
  - Paxil (paroxetine)
  - Prozac (fluoxetine)
  - Zoloft (sertraline)

Another type of mood disorder, Bi-polar Disorder, also called Manic Depression, is often marked by extremes in mood, from elation to deep despair and/or manic periods consisting of excessive excitement, delusions of grandeur, or mood elevation. Lithium, Zyprexa, Depakote, and Lamictal are used to treat bipolar disorders. Taking these types of drugs requires close monitoring and consultations with a Physician or Psychiatrist and may include frequent blood tests as well.

2. Schizophrenia
Schizophrenia can mean hallucinations and sensory misperceptions; delusions(strange ideas or false beliefs, including paranoia); distorted misinterpretation and retreat from reality; ambivalence; inappropriate affect; and bizarre, withdrawn, or aggressive behavior.

Major Tranquilizers are used for schizophrenia, anxiety, and severe behavior problems. These include:
- Haldol (haloperidol)
- Mellaril (thioridazine)
- Proloxin (fluphenazine)
- Risperdal (risperidone)
- Serentil (mesoridazine)
• Thorazine (chlorpromazine)
Newer medications in this category are:
  • Zyprexa (olanzapine)
  • Abilify (aripiprazole)
  • Clozaril (clozapine)

3. Anxiety Disorders
Anxiety disorders are typified by tension, fear, apprehension, discomfort, and distress. Two main types of anxiety disorders are:
  a. Generalized Anxiety Disorder
  b. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
Anti-anxiety medications are used to treat anxiety disorders and include:
  • Buspar (buspirone)
  • Librium (chlordiazepoxide)
  • Valium (diazepam)
  • Xanax (alprazolam)

*Note: Psychotropic Medication: Anti psychotics and Anti depressants require “informed consent.” This means that the parent, guardian, or individual (depending on the situation) must give consent for the medication to be administered in a residential setting.

### Common Side Effects Associated With Psychotropic Medications
Source: Psychotropic Medications in Person with Developmental Disabilities, by Dr. Bryan King.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Side Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors)</td>
<td>Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft, Luvox, Celexa</td>
<td>Stomach upset, sleeping problems, behavioral problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trycyclic anti-depressants</td>
<td>Anafranil, Elavil, Tofranil, and Norpramin</td>
<td>Constipation, dry mouth, dizziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other anti-depressants</td>
<td>Desyrel, Serzone, Remeron</td>
<td>Sleepiness, dizziness, dry mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>Ritalin, Dexedrine, Cylert</td>
<td>Insomnia, loss of appetite, mood changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroleptics/antipsychotics</td>
<td>Haldol, Risperdal, Mellaril</td>
<td>Sedation, weight gain, movement problems, restlessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood stabilizers</td>
<td>Lithium</td>
<td>Memory problems, thirstiness, shakiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiolytics</td>
<td>Valium, Xanax, Ativan</td>
<td>Sedation, unsteadiness, disinhibition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>