

## Psychotherapeutic Medications: What Every Counselor Should Know

### Multiple Choice

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

#### 1. Antipsychotics/Neuroleptics

Antipsychotics, also known as neuroleptics, are most frequently used for persons who experience psychotic symptoms as a result of having some form of schizophrenia, severe depression, or bipolar disorder. Which of the following is an accurate statement about the use of these medications?

- a. They may be used to treat psychotic symptoms such as being out of touch with reality, "hearing voices," and having false perceptions, but don't seem to be effective in treating brief psychotic episodes caused by drugs of abuse
- b. Positive treatment response to antipsychotic medications allows many with severe and disabling mental disorders to live and function in the community, often relatively normally
- c. Antipsychotic medications can be effective in either minimizing or stopping these symptoms but do not generally change or shorten the course of the illness or prevent it from happening again
- d. All of the above

2. Novel or atypical antipsychotics are different from traditional antipsychotics, as they are more powerful with treatment resistant schizophrenia but may also be used with severe depression or other psychiatric illness. However, because the atypical antipsychotics work in a slightly different way than traditional antipsychotics, they are more likely to produce serious side effects.

- a. True
- b. False

3. Being dazed and confused, difficulty breathing, rapid heart rate, and sweating and shakiness are associated with which type of potential side effects of antipsychotic medications?

- a. Neurological side effects
- b. Tardive Dyskinesia
- c. Symptoms of Diabetes Mellitus
- d. Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome

4. In general, the use of antipsychotic medications by pregnant women should be avoided in the first trimester unless the mother poses a danger to herself, to others, or to the unborn child, or if the mother shows signs of profound psychosis.

- a. True
- b. False

5. The neurological side effects of antipsychotic medications are similar to the symptoms of Parkinson's Disease, so antiparkinsonian (anticholinergic) medications are used to control the side effects associated with these medications. Each of the following is a true statement about antiparkinsonian medications EXCEPT:

- a. Possible side effects of antiparkinsonian substances include blurred vision, changes in sexual functioning, and weight gain
- b. People taking antiparkinsonian medications should not increase their dose unless this has been checked with their physician and a change is ordered
- c. Despite their utility, these medications can be abused by some persons with severe mental illness who require neuroleptics, and research has found that many abusers of antiparkinsonians used these medications “to get high, to increase pleasure, to decrease depression, to increase energy and to relax”
- d. Neurological effects of antipsychotic medication that need to be alleviated include tremors, stiff or rigid muscles, poor balance, and a distinctive unsteady walk

## 6. Antimanic Medications

Bipolar disorder is an illness is characterized by cycling mood changes from severe highs (mania) to severe lows (depression), and antimanic medications are used to control the mood swings associated with the illness. Which of the following correctly describes bipolar conditions?

- a. Bipolar I conditions, by definition do not include full mania, but are characterized more as depression plus a low level of mania (hypomania)
- b. Bipolar II conditions include full manic episodes with inability to sleep and concentrate
- c. Bipolar cycles that occur more often than 2 times a year are considered “rapid cycling,” a condition often found in people with higher rates of substance abuse
- d. If bipolar disorder is left untreated, the associated mania may worsen into a psychotic state and depression may result in thoughts of suicide

7. Tegretol, Depakote, and Lamictal all fall into which category of antimanic medications?

- a. Anticonvulsant products
- b. Lithium products
- c. Atypical psychotics
- d. None of the above

8. Overdose of lithium products is a life-threatening emergency and signs of lithium toxicity may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, drowsiness, mental dullness, slurred speech, confusion, dizziness, muscle twitching, irregular heartbeat and blurred vision. An overdose of this or any of the other antimanic medications is always considered an emergency and treatment should be sought immediately.

- a. True
- b. False

9. Antidepressant medications are used for moderate to serious depressions, but they can also be very helpful for milder depressions such as dysthymia. Which of the following is a true statement about the use of antidepressant medications?
- a. Most antidepressants must be taken for a period of 6 to 8 weeks to begin to reduce or take away the symptoms of depression, but a full therapeutic effect may not be present for several months
  - b. Positive responses to antidepressant medications that come later in treatment include improved energy concentration, and sleep. Early positive treatment responses include improved mood, attitude, and statements of “feeling better”
  - c. Antidepressant medications are used for moderate to serious depressions, but they can also be very helpful for milder depressions such as dysthymia
  - d. Treatment for a single episode of major depression should be continued for one year before discontinuing, and since major depression is a chronic recurrent illness for many people, long-term use of antidepressants is often indicated
10. The most frequently prescribed class of antidepressants are recommended because of their broad effectiveness, low side effects, and safety, and because they are thought to affect the neurotransmitter systems to reduce symptoms of depression. These medications are known as:
- a. SSRIs
  - b. Tricyclics
  - c. Quatracyclics
  - d. MAO inhibitors
11. All medications have specific doses and frequencies, and the physician will specify the exact amount of medication and when it should be taken. Several factors are considered before an antidepressant is prescribed including all of the following factors EXCEPT:
- a. the type of medication
  - b. the person’s individual body chemistry
  - c. gender
  - d. age
12. As with any medication, individuals who are taking antidepressants should be aware of potential risks associated with their use. Which of the following is NOT a true statement about risks associated with the use of antidepressants?
- a. An overdose of any of the MAO inhibitors, tricyclics, quatracyclics, or other antidepressants is serious and potentially life threatening and must be reported to a physician immediately
  - b. Withdrawal from SSRIs and other new antidepressants can cause flu-like symptoms, and discontinuing antidepressant therapy should be done gradually under a physician’s care
  - c. People taking antidepressant medications are particularly vulnerable to adverse medical consequences if they concurrently use alcohol and/or street drugs
  - d. Using tricyclic antidepressants is safer for the mother and fetus than using SSRIs, and amitriptyline is the most studied antidepressant in pregnancy, with results showing no increased incidence of birth defects or developmental abnormalities of





Medications involved in alcohol treatment include those used for acute alcohol withdrawal as well as a growing number used for alcohol relapse prevention. Which of the following is a correct statement about alcohol withdrawal and relapse agents?

- a. Though usually only treated for 5 to 10 days, signs and symptoms of alcohol withdrawal such as sleep disorder, anxiety, agitation, and craving alcohol go on for weeks or months
  - b. Barbiturates are by far the most commonly used medications for acute withdrawal, but if used longer than a few days, they induce tolerance and dependence
  - c. A well-designed U.S. study demonstrated that carbamazepine, an anticonvulsant, is much superior to lorazepam, a commonly used benzodiazepine, in treating alcohol withdrawal
  - d. All of the above
23. Mild opioid withdrawal can be accomplished with clonidine, a medication for treatment of high blood pressure, while major opioid withdrawal is usually treated with either an equivalent dose of methadone gradually decreased over time, or more recently, a single dose of 24 mg of buprenorphine. In pilot studies, clonidine appears superior to buprenorphine.
- a. True
  - b. False
24. Medications and products for tobacco cessation assist clients with nicotine dependence to achieve abstinence by alleviating or reducing common nicotine withdrawal symptoms and cravings. Which of the following accurately describes the use of medications for abstinence from nicotine-containing products?
- a. Recommended treatment strategies incorporate both behavioral counseling and pharmacotherapy, although pharmacotherapy is contraindicated for some specific populations including elderly adults, and clients taking anti-depressants or anti-anxiety medications
  - b. Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) such as transdermal nicotine patch, nicotine polacrilex gum and lozenge, nicotine nasal spray, and nicotine inhaler are FDA-approved and reduce withdrawal symptoms and cravings by replacing nicotine that would be ingested through chewing tobacco or smoking cigarettes
  - c. Clonidine, as an antidepressant, can help with withdrawal anxiety and depression, and nortriptyline is one of the few non-nicotine pharmaceutical aids that are FDA-approved for smoking cessation
  - d. Bupropion is a more recently FDA-approved smoking cessation medication and the first in its class targeting specifically the neurobiology of nicotine addiction

25. Recently, a withdrawal syndrome to marijuana dependence has been described and validated. Although medications for treating this syndrome have not been adequately tested, \_\_\_\_\_, which have anticholinergic and sedating agents like THC, but do not cause a high, nor are they abused, have been used in moderate doses to treat withdrawal from marijuana.
- a. Older lithium products
  - b. SSRIs
  - c. MAO inhibitors
  - d. Older tricyclic antidepressants
26. Acamprosate (Campral) was FDA approved in early 2005 and holds promise for alcohol craving and preventing relapse through a method different than naltrexone because it does not interact with most other medications, and does not cause any kind of tolerance or withdrawal symptoms. Although side effects with therapeutic doses of acamprosate are rare, if they occur they likely include:
- a. Agitation and coma
  - b. Body aches lasting 5-7 days
  - c. Nervousness and insomnia
  - d. All of the above
27. As with all medications, before dispensing addiction treatment medications, doctors and pharmacists should be told about all medications being taken and dosage, including over-the-counter preparations, vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements. Some precautions that need to be considered with these medications include all of the following EXCEPT:
- a. Smoking can have an effect on the way the body processes other prescribed medications, and substances found in tar in cigarettes stimulate enzymes in the liver, and fluctuations in an individual's smoking pattern can result in higher or lower doses of medications needed to reach therapeutic levels
  - b. People taking opioid medications are particularly vulnerable to adverse medical consequences if they concurrently use alcohol and/or street drugs
  - c. People taking disulfiram (Antabuse) should be aware that while small amounts of alcohol in other food products or "disguised forms" found in vanilla, sauces, vinegars, and cold and cough medicine will not likely cause a reaction, they should still be avoided
  - d. Those who take naltrexone or nalmefene should be aware that if they are dependent on opioids, taking these medications will cause opioid withdrawal for up to three days and block the effect of any opioids taken for up to three days
28. A National Institutes of Health consensus panel recommended methadone maintenance as the standard of care for pregnant women with opioid dependence. An effective therapeutic dose prevents the onset of withdrawal for 24 hours, reduces or eliminates drug craving, and blocks the euphoric effects of other narcotics, and is in the range of:
- a. 25-125mg
  - b. 50-150mg
  - c. 75-175mg
  - d. 100-200mg
29. Buprenorphine, naloxone, and nicotine replacement therapy are all contraindicated during pregnancy either because they have shown to be harmful to this population or because more data is needed to determine their safety and effectiveness with pregnant women.

- a. True
- b. False

30. **Tips for Communicating with Physicians about Clients and Medication**

Counselors should communicate with physicians about clients and medication so that the counselor's concerns can be included in the clients' medical records and can be acted on. The counselor should send a very detailed report that includes assessment and treatment details and makes recommendations about medications.

- a. True
- b. False