

Mental Health Nursing
Class Preparation
Antidepressant Therapy

Directions: Please fill in the blanks and answer the questions in the spaces provided.

1. What is the mechanism by which antidepressant medications achieve their desired effect (regardless of the different physiological processes by which this action is accomplished)?
They work on different neurotransmitters such as serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, these are important in regulating mood, anxiety, motivation, and arousal. They work by increasing the chemical signals in the brain, which helps to restore emotional balance.
2. For what must a nurse be on the alert with a client who is receiving antidepressant medication?
When a client is on an antidepressant it is important that we are monitoring for suicidal thoughts. It is important we are asking directly about suicide and looking for mood changes. It is important to ensure safety precautions in these patients.

3. When should a nurse expect a client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy? After 4-6 weeks their mood symptoms will improve. The first few days there will be no mood improvement. You will see physical symptoms improve before mood.

4. Give an example of a tricyclic antidepressant: Amitriptyline

Give an example of an MAOI: Phenelzine

Give an example of an SSRI: Fluoxetine

5. Describe some common side effects and nursing implications for tricyclic antidepressants

Some common side effects are anticholinergic effects, it is important that we are monitoring I&O, encouraging fluid, and reporting any difficulty urinating.

6. Hypertensive Crisis is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert include:

-Hypertension, nausea and vomiting, sweating, fever, and chills, restlessness, irritability

7. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring?

-Making sure to avoid tyramine-rich foods, aged cheeses

-Do not abruptly stop these medications

-Teach the client to talk to HCP before starting any new medications