

Learning Activity 4.1.

Psychotropic Medication Quiz

1. What is the mechanism of action by which antidepressant medications achieve the desired effect (regardless of the different physiological processes by which this action is accomplished)?

Antidepressants increase the availability of norepinephrine.

2. For what must the nurse be on the alert with the client who is receiving antidepressant medication?

Monitor for bettering or worsening of condition as well as serious safety issues such as suicidal thoughts.

3. As the nurse, when would you expect the client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy? It is expected that after 2 weeks of receiving antidepressant therapy

signs of symptomatic relief is evident.

4. Name an example of a tricyclic antidepressant - Amitriptyline.

Name an example of an MAOI - Selegiline

Name an example of an SSRI - Escitalopram

5. Describe some common side effects and nursing implications for tricyclic antidepressants. Postural hypotension which limits the usefulness of this medication in the elderly and people with cardiovascular

issues.

6. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs.

Symptoms for which the nurse and client must be on the alert include severe muscle rigidity, high fever,

tachycardia, fluctuations in blood pressure, diaphoresis, and rapid deterioration of mental status. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring? (Your answer must include some examples.)
Using medications at doses as low as possible as well as ensuring compatibility between medications in attempt to avoid high amounts of MAOIs being administered.

7. Lithium carbonate is commonly prescribed for bipolar disorder. Many times when these individuals are started on lithium therapy, the physician also orders an antipsychotic medication. Why might he or she do so? Lithium has a lag period of 7-10 days and antipsychotics are helpful because of their immediate sedative effects.
8. There is a narrow margin between the therapeutic and toxic serum levels of lithium carbonate. What is the therapeutic range? List the initial signs and symptoms of lithium toxicity. The therapeutic range of lithium is 0.6-1.2 mEq/L and toxicity may result in increasing nausea, anorexia, diarrhea, muscle weakness, drowsiness, ataxia, tremors, and muscle twitching.
9. Describe some nursing implications for the client on lithium therapy. Monitor therapeutic range of lithium closely, ensure other medications are compatible as many other drugs decrease the effectiveness.
10. What is the mechanism of action for anxiolytics (except for buspirone)? Anxiolytics depress subcortical levels of the CNS, particularly the limbic system and reticular formation.

11. What is the most commonly used group of anxiolytics? Give two examples. Benzodiazepines and anticonvulsants are two commonly used groups of anxiolytics.
12. What are the most common side effects of anxiolytics? The most common side effects of anxiolytics are drowsiness, confusion, and lethargy.
13. What must the client on long-term anxiolytic therapy be instructed in order to prevent a potentially life-threatening situation? Stopping the drug abruptly is life threatening and it is important to avoid withdrawal.
14. What is thought to be the mechanism of action that produces the desired effect with antipsychotic medications? Antipsychotics increase the availability of serotonin and dopamine.
15. Phenothiazines are an example of a “typical” antipsychotic group. Give two examples of phenothiazines and two examples of the newer “atypical” antipsychotics. Aripiprazole and asenapine are two examples of phenothiazines that are atypical antipsychotics.
16. Describe potential adverse hormonal effects associated with antipsychotic therapy. The male hormonal side effects are decreased libido, retrograde ejaculation, and gynecomastia, the female effects include amenorrhea.
17. Agranulocytosis is a potentially very serious side effect of antipsychotic therapy. The nurse and client should be on the alert for symptoms of fever, sore throat, and malaise.

18. Neuroleptic malignant syndrome (NMS) is a rare but potentially fatal side effect of antipsychotic drugs.
List symptoms for which the nurse must be on the alert when assessing for NMS. The nurse should be on alert for severe muscle rigidity, high fever, tachycardia, fluctuations in blood pressure, diaphoresis, and rapid deterioration of mental status when assessing for NMS.

19. Describe the symptoms of extrapyramidal side effects associated with antipsychotic therapy. The symptoms include dystonia's and tardive dyskinesias.

20. What is the classification of medication that is commonly prescribed for drug-induced extrapyramidal reactions? Give two examples of these medications. Vesicular monoamine transport 2, valbenazine and deuterobenzene are two examples of these medications.

21. Describe a potentially life-threatening situation that could occur in the client who abruptly withdraws from long-term use of CNS stimulants. Palpitations and tachycardia could be a potentially life-threatening situation in a situation of withdrawal.

Homework Assignment Questions and Answers

Please read the chapter and answer the following questions:

1. Identify three priority safety concerns for each class of psychotropic medications.

Antianxiety Agents – abrupt withdrawal, dependency, and severe CNS depression

Antipsychotics (novel) – EPS, involuntary movement disorders, and permanent side effects beyond discontinuation of drug.

Antipsychotics (phenothiazines and haloperidol) – hallucinations, delusions, and agitation

MAO Inhibitors – risk of suicidal thoughts, serotonin syndrome, and food interactions

SSNRIs – dizziness, serotonin syndrome, and abrupt discontinuation

SSRIs – heart arrhythmias, loss of consciousness, and greater risk of bleeding

Tricyclic antidepressants – disorientation, irregular heart rate, high blood pressure

2. Differentiate primary actions and side effects for traditional versus atypical antipsychotics.

Typical – block dopamine receptors, side effects are EPS, dystonia's, and tardive dyskinesias.

Atypical – unique functional profile with dopamine receptors, weight gain, EPS, cataracts

3. Differentiate primary actions and side effects for tricyclic versus SSRI antidepressants.

Tricyclic antidepressants – inhibits reuptake of neurotransmitters, drowsiness, xerostomia, tremor.

SSRI – inhibits reuptake of serotonin, serotonin syndrome, suicidal ideation, agitation.