

**Follow the instructions for the online assignment attached. The assignment must be completed and placed in Unit 1 Chapter 3: Psychopharmacotherapy Assignment Dropbox by 0800 on 5/28/2025. In order to receive full credit (0.5H class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignment not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time.**

#### 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 achieve their desired effect by increasing the amount of serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine that is released into the brain.**

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

**A nurse should monitor for serotonin syndrome, hypertensive crisis, increased sedation and lower seizure threshold. They should also make sure the client eats low in tyramine containing foods.**

3. As the nurse, when would you expect the client to begin showing signs of symptomatic relief after the initiation of antidepressant therapy? **A patient taking antidepressants should start to show signs of symptomatic relief 2 weeks after starting the medication. After 4 weeks of taking the medication they should receive the full therapeutic effect of the medication.**

4. Name an example of a tricyclic antidepressant. Amitriptyline

Name an example of an MAOI. Phenelzine

Name an example of an SSRI. Fluoxetine

5. Describe some common side effects and nursing implications for tricyclic antidepressants. Some **common side effects of tricyclic antidepressants are postural hypotension, dry mouth, and urinary retention.**
  
6. **Hypertensive crisis** \_\_\_\_\_ is the most potentially life-threatening adverse effect of MAOIs. Symptoms for which the nurse and client must be on the alert include **headache, hypertension, chest pain, coma.** \_\_\_\_\_. What must be done to prevent these symptoms from occurring? (Your answer must include some examples.) **To prevent these symptoms from occurring avoid food high in tyramines like red wine and cheese.**
  
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? **A physician might order antipsychotic medication because lithium takes 7-10 days to start fully working in the body.**
  
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 0.6-1.2meq/L. Some initial signs of lithium toxicity are vomiting, diarrhea, and a blood level of less than 1.2mEq/L.**
  
9. Describe some nursing implications for the client on lithium therapy. **Some nursing implications for a patient on lithium therapy include encouraging the patient to drink plenty of water, educating on**

**getting their blood drawn to check the serum levels of the lithium, and instructing the patient on reporting all forms of medications.**

10. What is the mechanism of action for anxiolytics (with the exception of buspirone)?

**Antianxiety medications depress subcortical levels of the central nervous system. They may potentiate the effects of GABA In the brain.**

11. What is the most commonly used group of anxiolytics? Give two examples.

**The most commonly used anxiolytics are Benzodiazepines two examples are Lorazepam and diazepam.**

12. What are the most common side effects of anxiolytics?

**Psychomotor impairment, cognitive impairment, coma, and an increase in anxiety are the most common side effects of anxiolytics.**

13. What must the client on long-term anxiolytic therapy be instructed in order to prevent a potentially life-threatening situation?

**The patient should be informed to never stop the medication abruptly.**

14. What is thought to be the mechanism of action that produces the desired effect with antipsychotic medications?

**Antipsychotic medication work by blocking dopamine 2, acetylcholine, histamine and norepinephrine receptors in the brain.**

15. Phenothiazines are an example of a “typical” antipsychotic group. Give two examples of phenothiazines and two examples of the newer “atypical” antipsychotics.

**Two examples of atypical antipsychotics are clozapine and ziprasidone. Two examples of typical antipsychotics are thiothixene and Haldol.**

16. Describe potential adverse hormonal effects associated with antipsychotic therapy.

**Some adverse hormonal effects include gynecomastia, retrograde ejaculation, and amenorrhea.**

Agranulocytosis is a potentially very serious side effect of antipsychotic therapy. The nurse and client should be on the alert for symptoms of   sore throat  ,   fever  , and   malaise  .

17. 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 must be on high alert for tachycardia, fever, muscle rigidity, and diaphoresis.**

18. Describe the symptoms of extrapyramidal side effects associated with antipsychotic therapy.

**The symptoms of extrapyramidal side effects include akinesia, dystonia, oculogyric crisis, and tardive dyskinesia.**

19. What is the classification of medication that is commonly prescribed for drug-induced extrapyramidal reactions? Give two examples of these medications.

**The medications commonly prescribed for drug-induced extrapyramidal reactions are antiparkinsonian agents. Two examples include benztropine and trihexyphenidyl.**

20. Describe a potentially life-threatening situation that could occur in the client who abruptly withdraws from long-term use of CNS stimulants.

**If a patient abruptly withdraws from long-term use of CNS stimulants NMS Neuroleptic Malignant syndrome.**



## 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*

*The priority safety concern for this class is confusion and lethargy, as well as medication dependence.*

### *Antipsychotics (novel)*

*The priority safety concern for this class is death in older patients due to increased confusion and cardiovascular events.*

### *Antipsychotics (phenothiazines and haloperidol)*

*The priority safety concern for this class is agranulocytosis and neuroleptic malignant syndrome.*

### *MAO Inhibitors*

*The priority safety concern for this class is hypertensive crisis, sedation, and serotonin syndrome.*

### *SSNRIs*

*The priority safety concerns for this class are serotonin syndrome, tremors, and sleep disturbances.*

### *SSRIs*

*The priority safety concern for this class is increased risk for suicide, confusion, and serotonin syndrome.*

***Tricyclic antidepressants***

***The priority safety concern for this class is postural hypotension, tachycardia, and blurred vision.***

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

The primary action of traditional antipsychotics is to block postsynaptic dopamine receptors in the brain. Some side effects of the traditional antipsychotics include prolonged qt intervals, agranulocytosis, and sedation. Some traditional antipsychotic medications are phenothiazines. The primary action of the atypical antipsychotic medications is to weaken dopamine and are potent agonists to the serotonin receptors. Most side effects are the same as the primary. The biggest difference is the primary medications have a higher risk for extrapyramidal effects.

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

The primary action of tricyclic antidepressants are binding neurotransmitters to receptor sites to increase norepinephrine in the brain. These medications have anticholinergic side effects which include dry mouth, urinary retention and blurry vision. It is important to educate patients to carry hard candy and drink lots of water. SSRI work by inhibiting the reuptake of serotonin in the body which allows for more serotonin to build up in the body. Some common side effects include serotonin syndrome, decreased libido, and sleep disturbances.