

Research Assessment 12

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Analysis:

In Forensic Psychiatry and Psychiatry in general, there is a plethora of medications given to psychiatric patients. Each drug treats specific symptoms and helps individuals get better, but they also have various side effects. Many psychiatric medications cause issues such as constipation (which can lead to renal failure and be fatal) and stiffness of joints. The effects of medications are concerning because the effects must then be treated with additional drugs which have their own side effects as well. It often times causes a chain of medications being administered to patients. Some of these drugs are commonly known to the public such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen while others such as Haldol are less known. Since medications are a crucial part of providing care to psychiatric patients, evaluating the different medications I have come across so far at Terrell State Hospital and their myriad of effects would be beneficial to my learning and understanding.

To start off, I will be providing a data table of medications which will provide a comprehensive view of the information I will later explain in detail.

Generic Name	Proprietary Name	Type	Treats
Olanzapine	Zyprexa	Antipsychotic medication	Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder
Haloperidol	Haldol	Antipsychotic medication	Schizophrenia, motor and speech issues in patients with Tourette's Syndrome
Chlorpromazine	Thorazine	Antipsychotic medication	Schizophrenia, manic depression, severe behavioral issues, vomiting, nausea, anxiety, mood disorders
Lorazepam	Ativan	Benzodiazepine	Anxiety disorders, anxiety, insomnia, alcohol withdrawal, mania, nausea

Clozapine	Clozaril	Antipsychotic medication	Severe schizophrenia, reduces risk of suicidal behavior, schizoaffective disorder, psychotic disorders
Simethicone	Maalox	Antacid	Acid indigestion, heartburn, stomach upset, bloating
Benztropine Mesylate	Cogentin	Anticholinergic	Muscle stiffness, sweating, production of saliva, severe muscle spasms, involuntary movements

Zyprexa, which is also known as olanzapine, is a commonly used antipsychotic medication used to treat depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder. Additionally, zyprexa can help individuals become more active, less aggressive, think more positively and can help decrease hallucinations. This drug helps individual's taking it by affecting chemicals in their brain. To specify, Olanzapine restores chemical equilibrium to the brain by balancing certain natural hormones. However, as useful as this medication may be for some, it comes with a myriad of negative side effects. Not only can zyprexa cause thinking and reaction impairment, but it also causes hyperglycemia (high blood sugar), dehydration, overheating, weight gain, neuroleptic malignant syndrome, tremors, seizures and weight gain. Surprisingly, a very common side effect of most antipsychotic drugs, is constipation. Some of these side effects cause chronic and reversible medical issues such as diabetes, heart disease and dyskinesia (voluntary movement impairment). Moreover, it is important that individuals with dementia or dementia related conditions not take this medication because it can increase an individual's risk of death.

Haldol, otherwise called Haloperidol, is also classified as an antipsychotic drug, and is utilized to treat schizophrenia, motor and speech impairments in patients with Tourette's Syndrome, and acute psychosis. Haldol is effective because it interferes with the effects of neurotransmitters (the chemical messengers that are created for communication) in an individual's brains. The drug blocks receptors from neurotransmitters such as dopamine which helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centers as well as regulate movement and emotional responses. This

blockage causes nerves to not become activated by the neurotransmitters released by other nerves. Common side effects are dehydration, overheating, nausea, weight gain, constipation, decrease in white and red blood cells hyperactivity, and extrapyramidal effects. Additionally, haloperidol can cause severe disorders such as orthostatic hypotension. Similar to zyprexa, this medication should not be administered to or taken by individuals who have Parkinson's, Central Nervous System Depression and dementia because of the increase of risk of death.

Another antipsychotic medication used in psychiatric settings is Thorazine. Its generic name is chlorpromazine, which is more difficult to remember and say. Thorazine is administered to those suffering from schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, hallucination, manic depression, severe behavioral issues, vomiting, nausea, anxiety, mood disorders. Additionally, chlorpromazine helps individuals think more clearly, feel less nervous, take part in everyday life, reduce aggressive behavior and prevent suicidal tendencies. Like many other antipsychotic disorders, this medication increases the risk of death in those with dementia. Here are side effects of thorazine: dizziness, lightheadedness, muscle spasms, seizure, weight gain, constipation, dry mouth, orthostatic hypotension, insomnia, trouble swallowing, Thorazine can causes severe illnesses and disorders such as heart failure, tardive dyskinesia, pneumonia, and arrhythmia.

Clozaril, the last antipsychotic medication to be discussed in the paper, is also known by its generic name, clozapine. Interestingly enough, this drug is more commonly known by its generic name rather than its brand name. Like thorazine and haldol, clozaril interferes with the effects of neurotransmitters. However, clozapine only weakly blocks dopamine and other neurotransmitters. This medication treats severe schizophrenia,, schizoaffective disorder, psychotic disorders and reduces risk of suicidal behavior. Clozapine is known to have side effects such as weight gain, seizures, constipation, dry mouth, arrhythmia, tremors, and neutropenia. Clozapine is not approved for those with dementia or dementia related disorders. Severe illnesses and conditions caused by clozaril are cardiac and respiratory arrest, and hypothermia.

Lastly, ativan is utilized to treat anxiety disorders, anxiety, insomnia, alcohol withdrawal, seizures, mania, and nausea. Unlike the other psychiatric drugs I have mentioned, ativan, which is also known as lorazepam, is classified as a benzodiazepine. This medication works by enhancing the effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA)

in the brain to reduce nerve activity. Side effects include: weakness, sleep disturbance, loss of orientation and sedation. One unfortunate aspect of lorazepam is that it, like other benzodiazepines, causes physical dependence in those taking it. Suddenly stopping administration of the medication, can cause severe effects such as insomnia, agitation, seizures, tremors, muscle cramping, vomiting, and sweating. Ativan should be avoided being given to those who are pregnant.

As you can see, these common psychiatric drugs have many side effects, and it is important to monitor patients for them to prevent serious illnesses and even death. Easily treatable side effects such as constipation, dehydration and overheating have all been known to have caused death. According to an autopsy from a recent incident, a patient died from hypothermia because of dehydration and overheating from all the medications he was taking. Improper medical monitoring failed to recognize this and caused this patient who was unable to take care of himself pass away. If this individual had drunk more water, and if the air conditioner had kept the air cooler, he would have undoubtedly have lived.

To address side effects caused by these medications, more drugs are prescribed to help the patient. For example, Maalox, also known as simethicone, is a commonly used antacid. This means that it is used to treat stomach issues such as stomach upset, heartburn, acid indigestion gas, and bloating. Another drug used to treat the side effects of psychiatric drugs is Cogentin or Benztropine Mesylate, which is classified as an anticholinergic. Cogentin is administered to treat common side effects such as muscle stiffness, sweating, production of saliva, severe muscle spasms, involuntary movements. Treating side effects is very important because it can not only create severe discomfort and pain for the patient, but also cause severe illnesses to form and/or death to occur.

After learning about the many drugs I heard be mentioned at Terrell State Hospital, I know that I have a better understanding of the field. Now, if I ever hear or read that an individual is taking a specific drug, I will have previous knowledge and be able to link that drug to information. For example, the usage of clozapine had been forever burned into my brain, and if I ever heard that someone is being given it, I would be able to determine that the patient most likely has severe schizophrenia or a psychotic disorder. This will be helpful in the future for when I have hospital visits and for when I read various psychiatric articles and assessments.