Medications in Dementia Patients

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Objectives

- Identify medications that are common to Alzheimer's Disease (AD) and Dementia patients
- Recognize common medication
  - Side effects
  - Drug/ Food interactions
  - Monitoring
- Identify frequent non-FDA approved medications for the treatment of AD and dementia
Disease States in the Elderly

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Cerebrovascular Disease
- Diabetes
- Arthritis
- Asthma/Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Alzheimer’s Disease
- Dementia
Medications in AD/Dementia

- Improve memory and daily functioning
- Treatment of behavioral issues
- Miscellaneous treatments
- Investigational Drugs
Improving memory and daily functioning

- Acetylcholinesterase (AChE) Inhibitors
  - FDA approved for treatment of mild to moderate AD

- NMDA Blockers
  - FDA approved for treatment of moderate to severe AD
AChE Inhibitors

- **Acetylcholine**
  - Chemical required for communication between brain nerve cells (memory and thinking)
  - As AD progresses, the brain produces less acetylcholine
  - AChE inhibitors prevent the breakdown of acetylcholine so nerve cells can communicate better

- **Agents**
  - Razadyne ® (galantamine, Reminyl ®)
  - Exelon ® (rivastigmine)
  - Aricept ® (donepezil)
  - Cognex ® (tacrine)

- **Medication Indications**
  - Chronic treatment of mild to moderate AD
AChE Inhibitors

Drug Interactions

- Increase effects with concurrent use
  - Tagamet ® (cimetidine)
  - Nizoral ® (ketoconazole)
  - Norvir ® (ritonovir)
  - Paxil ® (paroxetine)
  - Erythromycin

- Decrease effects with concurrent use
  - Antihistamines (benadryl)
  - Bladder control drugs (Detrol ®)

Side effects

- Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, muscle cramps, headaches, dizziness, appetite loss and skin reddening
NMDA Blockers

NMDA
- Stimulated by chemical called glutamate
- Over stimulation causes decreased nerve cell function and eventually nerve cell death

Agents
- Namenda ® (memantine)

Medication Indications
- Chronic treatment of moderate to severe AD in conjunction with AChE inhibitors

Drug Interactions
- Sodium bicarbonate
- Diamox ® (acetazolamide)

Side effects
- Dizziness, headache, Constipation
Treatment of behavioral issues

- Agitation
- Aggression
- Sleep disorders
- Psychosis/Delusions/Hallucinations
- Depression
- Anxiety
Antipsychotics

Management of agitation, aggression, Delusions, Hallucinations, sleep disorders, Psychosis

Agents
- Haldol ® (Haloperidol )
- Risperdal ® (risperidone)
- Zyprexa ® (olanzapine)
- Seroquel ® (quetiapine)
- Abilify ® (aripiprazole)

Medication Indications
- Management of behavioral issues associated with AD or dementia
- Management of primary behavioral disorders
- Caution in using it in patients with dementia induced psychosis
Antipsychotics

Drug Interactions
- Antidepressants
- Antihistamines
- Parkisons Disease medications

Side effects
- Trembling, restlessness, dry mouth, confusion, weight gain
Antipsychotics

Update

FDA “black box warning” for Abilify (aripiprazole)

WARNINGS: INCREASED MORTALITY IN ELDERLY PATIENTS WITH DEMENTIA-RELATED PSYCHOSIS and SUICIDALITY AND ANTIDEPRESSANT DRUGS

See full prescribing information for complete boxed warning.

- Elderly patients with dementia-related psychosis treated with antipsychotic drugs are at an increased risk of death. ABILIFY is not approved for the treatment of patients with dementia-related psychosis. (5.1)

- Children, adolescents, and young adults taking antidepressants for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and other psychiatric disorders are at increased risk of suicidal thinking and behavior. (5.2)

Antidepressants

Depression
- Primary disorder
- Complication of AD/Dementia
- Side effect of treatment

Agents
- Paxil ® (paroxetine)
- Prozac ® (fluoxetine)
- Zoloft ® (sertraline)
- Effexor ® (venlafaxine)

Medication Indication
- Management of primary depression
- Management of AD/dementia induced depression
Treatment of anxiety

Anxiety
- Primary disorder
- Complication of AD/Dementia
- Side effect of treatment

Agents
- Xanax ® (alprazolam)
- Ativan ® (lorazepam)
- Valium ® (diazepam)
- Buspar ® (buspirone)

Medication Indications
- Management of of primary anxiety disorders
- Management of AD/ dementia induced anxiety
Treatment of anxiety

- Side Effects
  - Increased agitation and somnolence

- Caution
  - Elderly
  - Dementia
Miscellaneous Treatments*

- Eldepryl (selegiline)
  - Used in the treatment of Parkinson’s Disease
  - May improve behavioral and cognitive function

- Estrogens
  - May enhance nerve cells in woman during menopause

- Cholesterol medications
  - “statins”
  - Data illustrates a decreased risk of AD/dementia in patients taking these medications

* Pending further data and research
Miscellaneous Treatments

- Anti-inflammatory medications
  - Advil ® (ibuprofen)
  - Aleve ® (naproxen)
  - Decrease inflammation common in AD

- Antioxidants
  - Vitamin C
  - Vitamin E

* Pending further data and research
Investigational Agents

Amyloid deposit inhibitors

- Amyloid
  - Alzheimer’s Disease plaques

- Agent
  - Clioquinoline
  - May inhibit the deposition of amyloid

* Pending further data and research
For further questions regarding this slide set, please email the author at
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Dr. DeeDee Hu graduated with a Doctor of Pharmacy Degree from the University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy. After graduation, she completed an internal medicine/pharmacy practice residency at Scott and White Health System Hospital in Temple, Texas. Her further post-doctorate training also includes a specialty residency at the DeBakey Heart Institute — The Methodist Hospital, Texas Medical Center, Houston, Texas. She is currently active staff at Memorial Hermann Memorial City Medical Center, Houston, Texas. Her specialty includes that of critical care medicine, cardiology and infectious disease services. She is an associate clinical faculty member at the University of Houston College of Pharmacy, and is an active preceptor of pharmacy student interns and Memorial Hermann residents. Dr. Hu’s current research portfolio includes the perioperative management of cardiovascular surgery patients, Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS) therapy in underdeveloped countries, and the usage of vitamin supplementation in conjunction with anti-parasitic therapy for children in third world countries. In addition to her role as inpatient hospital staff, Dr. Hu is an active consultant for pharmacotherapy review for Assisted Living Facilities and Nursing Homes that serve the geriatric population.

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