Drugs for
Anxiolytics

葵涌醫院
KWAI CHUNG
HOSPITAL

醫院管理局
HOSPITAL
AUTHORITY

What are anti-anxiety drugs?

They act on the central nervous system to alleviate the symptoms of anxiety and nervousness, stabilize mood and improve sleep. Long term use may develop psychological and physiological dependence.

Categories of anti-anxiety drugs

1. Tranquilizers
2. New Anti-drpressants
3. β-blockers

1. Tranquilizers

a. What are their indications?

They are used to relieve the symptoms of anxiety. They also have calming and sleep promoting effects. Other indications include: muscle relaxation, anti-epileptic, etc.

b. What are their mechanisms of action?

They either increase or decrease the concentrations and activities of the neurotransmitters, like GABA, serotonin, noradrenaline on the brain GABA receptors, thus alleviating the symptoms of anxiety.

c. What are their side effects?

Dizziness, drowsiness, somnolence, fatigue, body imbalance, loss of memory, difficulty in carrying out voluntary movements, dry mouth, impaired coordination, drugs dependence and withdrawal symptoms, etc. Patients should avoid taking any alcoholic beverages.

This kind of drugs has a high potency to be abused, so patients must comply with doctors' instructions when taking these medications.

Do not discontinue taking medications on your own. Please follow the doctors' instructions to step down the dose gradually, so as to avoid any discomforts and withdrawal symptoms, such as: insomnia, tremor, sweating, etc.

2. New anti-depressants

a) *What are the commonly used new anti-depressants?*

    1) Serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs)

    2) Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)

b) *What are the indications of SNRIs?*

They are used to treat both anxiety and depression.

c) *What are the mechanisms of action of SNRIs?*

By balancing the disorder of neurotransmitters – serotonin and noradrenaline in the brain to provide clinical effects.

d) *What are the side effects of SNRIs?*

Dry mouth, gastro-intestinal upsets, nausea and fatigue.

e) *What are the indications of SSRIs?*

Treatment of anxiety, depression and other mood disorders.

f) *What are the mechanisms of actions of SSRIs?*

They balance the disorder of neurotransmitter – serotonin in the brain to exert therapeutic effects.

g) *What the side effects of SSRIs?*

Fatigue, nausea, gastro-intestinal upsets and sweating.

➢ **β-blockers**

a. *What are their indications?*

They are used to treat palpitation and hand tremor.

b. *What are their mechanisms of action?*

They work by inhibiting the autonomic nervous system, thereby alieving the anxiety-induced symptoms, such as palpitation and hand tremor.

c. *What are their side effects?*

Insomnia, nightmare, slow heart rate, gastrointestinal upsets and fatigue.

d. *Who should avoid taking β-blockers?*

Patients with asthma, heart failure, peripheral vascular diseases and diabetes mellitus.

If patients experience any undesirable side effects during drug treatment, do not worry and inform your doctors for adjustment.

Frequently Asked Questions

May I stop taking my medicine?

It is necessary to take your medicine promptly in order to control your illness. According to scientific research, the rates of relapse increase drastically if one is not taking their medications. If you disregard your condition, your chance of recovery would be lessened.

What to do before taking my medication?

Before taking your medication, you must always ensure whether the medicine belongs to you, always follow your doctor's instructions, and those on the pharmacy label. You should never change the prescribed dosage or stop your medication without your doctor's direction. And never take two doses at the same time if you forget to take a dose.

How to deal with side effects?

Talk to your doctor if you experience any side effects. Your doctor may adjust the dosage in order to minimize the adverse effects. Do not stop taking your medicine without your doctor's direction.

How long do I need to take my medicine?

The duration of therapy varies according to the types and severities of illness. Generally speaking, patients with schizophrenia, particularly those with a history of relapse, need to take their medications for a longer period of time. But if your condition is stable, your doctor may adjust the dosage to the minimal-effective dose to control your illness. What should the care-givers do if patients refuse to take their medications? Do not criticize the patients. Try to find out the underlying reason for their refusal e.g. if the patients experience any undesirable side effects or have any necessary concern about their medications, etc. Encouragement from the family and comprehensive explanation of their drug treatment is crucial. Contact the healthcare professionals if the patients still refuse to take the medications

What should the care-givers do if patients refuse to take their medications?

Do not criticize the patients. Try to find out the underlying reason for their refusal e.g. if the patients experience any undesirable side effects or have any necessary worry about their medications, etc. Encouragement from the family and comprehensive explanation of their drug treatment is crucial. Contact the healthcare professionals if the patients still refuse to take the medications.

DO
1. Strictly follow the doctor's instructions
2. Pay attention to the drug name, dosage and frequency, etc. before taking your medication
3. Read the prescription label carefully
4. Pay attention to the dosage, indication, contraindication and side effects
5. Understand the method of administration
6. Store your medication properly
7. Complete the prescribed course unless otherwise directed
8. If you have any questions, talk to your family and ask your health care professionals

DON'Ts
1. Change the dosage of your medication on your own
2. Stop taking your medication except on your doctor's advice.
3. Drink alcohol with your medication.
4. Put your medication in other bottle.
5. Take other medication unless directed by your doctor.
6. Lie to your doctors about your compliance