



Tardive Akathisia

BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life. This document provides general information on the topic and is not intended to replace team assessment, decision-making, or medical advice. This is the ninth of ten Fact Sheets regarding psychotropic medications.

Intended Outcomes

Individuals will understand the symptoms, common causes, and treatment of tardive akathisia.

Definitions

Akathisia: A movement disorder characterized by motor restlessness/a feeling of inner restlessness with a compelling need to be moving.

Tardive akathisia: A severe prolonged form of akathisia which may persist after stopping the medication causing the symptoms.

Facts

- Akathisia is:
 - the most common drug induced movement disorder.
 - a side effect of medication.
 - most often caused by antipsychotic medications that block dopamine.
- Medications with akathisia as a potential side effect include:
 - Benzisothiazole (ziprasidone)
 - Benzisoxazole (iloperidone)
 - Butyrophenones (haloperidol, droperidol)
 - Calcium channel blockers (flunarizine, cinnarizine)
 - Dibenzazepine (loxapine, asenapine)
 - Dibenzodiazepine (clozapine, quetiapine)
 - Diphenylbutylpiperidine (pimozide)
 - Indolones (molindone)
 - Lithium
 - Phenothiazines (chlorpromazine, trifluoperazine, thioridazine, mesoridazine, trifluoperazine, prochlorperazine, perphenazine, fluphenazine, perazine)



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- Pyrimidinone (risperidone, paliperidone)
- Quinolinone (aripiprazole)
- Substitute benzamides (metoclopramide, tiapride, sulpiride, clebopride, remoxipride, veralipride, amisulpride, levosulpiride)
- Serotonin reuptake or serotonin norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (duloxetine, citalopram)
- Thienobenzodiazepine (olanzapine)
- Thioxanthenes (chlorprothixene, thiothixene)
- Tricyclic antidepressants (amoxapine)
 - Trilafon (perphenazine)
- Symptoms of akathisia include:
 - Restlessness
 - Feelings of unspecific anxiousness
 - Shifting weight from one foot to another
 - Walking in place
 - Foot shuffling
 - Leg swinging or repeated crossing of the legs
- Treatment typically involves removing the medication causing the symptoms.
- When the physician believes the medication is essential to the patient's treatment, the physician may choose to continue the medication and treat the akathisia with another medication such as an anticholinergic medication (Cogentin) or a benzodiazepine (Klonopin).
- Akathisia generally begins shortly after starting the medication.
- Tardive akathisia typically occurs later, after prolonged use.
- Tardive akathisia may not resolve quickly after stopping the medication causing the symptoms, it may improve over several months, or it may be permanent.
- Akathisia may also get worse for a time after stopping the medications causing the symptoms; this is called "withdrawal akathisia".

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies



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1. Watch the individual for changes in status and movement at all times but especially when new medications are added. Report changes in status and movement to nurse/supervisor/prescriber if noted.
2. Make sure that any individual on antipsychotic medication has an AIMS (Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale) test completed, as per the prescriber's recommendations.
3. Discuss the need for completion of the AIMS test with the prescriber if antipsychotic medications are added or the dosage is changed.
4. Write down monthly weight, vital signs, and sleep data and report any changes to the nurse/supervisor.



Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. Akathisia is most often caused by:
 - A. Antidepressants
 - B. Antipsychotics
 - C. Anticonvulsants
 - D. Antihypertensives
2. Symptoms of akathisia include:
 - A. Restlessness
 - B. Walking in place
 - C. Leg swinging
 - D. All of the above
3. Treatment of akathisia includes:
 - A. Stopping the medication causing the symptoms
 - B. Anticholinergic medications
 - C. Benzodiazepines
 - D. All of the above
4. Tardive akathisia typically occurs:
 - A. Immediately after starting the medication causing the symptoms
 - B. After stopping the medication causing the symptoms
 - C. After prolonged use of the medication causing the symptoms
 - D. Never



References

American Academy of Neurology. Treatment and managing tardive syndromes. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <https://www.aan.com/Guidelines/home/GetGuidelineContent/614>.

Brasic, J. R. & Benbadis, S. R. (2014). Tardive Dyskinesia. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1151826-overview>.

Factor, S. A. & Jankovic, J. (2013). Akathisia. Retrieved 08/01/2015 from <http://www.medlink.com/medlinkcontent.asp>.

Related Resources

“Tardive Dyskinesia” Fact Sheet

Learning Assessment Answers

1. B
2. D
3. D
4. C