Introduction to Antianxiety Drugs

- Antianxiety drugs or anxiolytics
  - Long-term use of benzodiazepines can result in physical dependence or psychological addiction
  - Nonbenzodiazepines: Useful antianxiety drugs

Antianxiety Drugs: Actions

- Anxiolytic drugs: Block neurotransmitter receptor sites
- Benzodiazepines: Potentiate effects of gamma-aminobutyric acid
- Nonbenzodiazepines exert in various ways
- Buspirone acts on serotonin receptors
- Hydroxyzine acts on hypothalamus and brainstem reticular formation
Antianxiety Drugs: Uses
• Anxiety disorders, panic attacks
• Preanesthetic sedatives, muscle relaxants
• Convulsions or seizures
• Alcohol withdrawal

Antianxiety Drugs: Adverse Reactions
• Early reactions: Mild drowsiness or sedation, lightheadedness or dizziness, headache
• Other adverse body system reactions
  – Lethargy, apathy, fatigue
  – Disorientation, anger, restlessness
  – Nausea, constipation or diarrhea, dry mouth
  – Visual disturbances

Antianxiety Drugs: Dependence
• Long-term use results in physical drug dependence and tolerance
• Withdrawal symptoms may occur with as few as 4-6 weeks of therapy with benzodiazepine
• Nursing alert
  – Symptoms of benzodiazepine withdrawal: Increased anxiety, concentration difficulties, tremor and sensory disturbances
Antianxiety Drugs: Contraindications
- Patients: Hypersensitivity, psychoses, and acute narrow-angle glaucoma
- During pregnancy (category D) and labor due to floppy infant syndrome manifested by sucking difficulties, lethargy, hypotonia in the newborn
- Lactating women
- Drugs contraindicated in patients in coma or shock or if vital signs of patient in acute alcoholic intoxication are low

Antianxiety Drugs: Precautions
- Used cautiously with elderly patients and patients with impaired liver or kidney function or debilitation

Antianxiety Drugs: Interactions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interactant Drug</th>
<th>Effect of Interaction with Penicillin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Increased risk for central nervous system (CNS) depression or convulsions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analgesics</td>
<td>Increased risk for CNS depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricyclic antidepressants, antipsychotics</td>
<td>Increased risk for sedation and respiratory depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digoxin</td>
<td>Increased risk for digitalis toxicity</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Nursing Process: Assessment

• Preadministration assessment
  – Nurse obtains medical history, mental status, anxiety level before initiating therapy
  – Physical assessment, physiologic manifestations of anxiety
  – Mental status and anxiety level

Nursing Process: Assessment

• Ongoing assessment
  – Check: Blood pressure before drug administration
  – Periodically monitor mental status and anxiety level
  – Ask patient or family about adverse effects of drug
  – Document: General summary of patient’s outward behavior, complaints, or problems

Nursing Process: Nursing Diagnosis and Planning

• Drug-specific nursing diagnoses: Nursing diagnoses checklist
• Expected patient outcome: Optimal response to drug therapy, knowledge of and compliance with prescribed therapeutic regimen, managing adverse drug reactions
Nursing Process: Implementation
• Promoting an optimal response to therapy
  – During initial therapy, the nurse observes for adverse drug reactions
  – The antianxiety drugs are not recommended for long-term use
  – If used for short periods (1-2 weeks), tolerance, withdrawal, or dependence does not usually develop
  – Report

Nursing Process: Implementation
• Monitoring and managing patient needs
  – Risk for injury
  – During outpatient therapy, the nurse should instruct the family and patient about adverse reactions
  – Gerontologic alert: Lorazepam and oxazepam
  – Buspirone
  – Nursing care plan

Nursing Process: Implementation
• Monitoring and managing patient needs (cont’d)
  – Monitor
  – Instruction
  – Sedation, drowsiness
  – Intramuscularly
  – Parenteral administration
Nursing Process: Implementation

• Impaired comfort
  - Cause
  - Nursing interventions
  - Administer
  - Meals include fiber, fruits, and vegetables to aid in preventing constipation
  - Careful with oral route due to dry mouth causing swallowing problems

Nursing Process: Implementation

• Ineffective individual coping
  - Outpatient: The nurse observes the patient for response to therapy at time of each clinic visit
  - Use open-ended questions about response to therapy
  - Once patient’s anxiety is reduced, the nurse may be able to help identify precipitation of panic/cause of anxiety

Nursing Process: Implementation (cont’d)

• Ineffective individual coping (cont’d)
  - Important to help patient understand there are health care providers that can help them gain coping skills
  - Benzodiazepine toxicity
  - Flumazenil
  - Adverse reactions to Flumazenil include agitation, confusion, seizures, and in some cases, symptoms of benzodiazepine withdrawal, relieved with administration of benzodiazepine
**Nursing Process: Implementation**

- Educating the patient and family
  - The nurse needs to evaluate the patient’s ability to assume responsibility for taking the drugs at home
  - The nurse explains adverse effects of specific drugs and encourages the patient and family to contact PHCP if serious adverse effects

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**Nursing Process: Implementation**

- Educating the patient and family (cont’d)
  - Teaching plan
    - Take drug as directed
    - Avoid performing hazardous tasks, alcohol
    - Do not discontinue drugs abruptly
    - No OTC or supplements without consulting PHCP
    - Inform dentist, physicians, and health care providers of your therapy

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**Nursing Process: Implementation**

- Educating the patient and family
  - Teaching plan (cont’d)
    - If dizziness occurs when changing positions, do so slowly; if severe, ask for help
    - Eat food rich in fiber to prevent constipation
    - Keep all appointments with PHCP
    - Report any unusual changes
Nursing Process: Implementation

- Evaluation
  - Therapeutic effect achieved
  - Patient reports decrease in feelings of anxiety
  - Adverse reactions: Identified, reported to health care provider
  - Verbalize importance of complying with prescribed therapeutic regimen

End of Presentation