



Clozapine (Clozaril/FazaClo)

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 seventh of ten Fact Sheets regarding psychotropic medications.

Intended Outcomes

Individuals will understand why clozapine is prescribed, how it works, the range and severity of side effects, how the physician monitors this medicine, and the actions needed to support someone on these medications.

Definitions

Clozapine: A medication used to treat psychosis, mania, severe aggression, or severe depression. This medication is used to treat these disorders when other medications have failed.

Abnormal Involuntary Movement Scale (AIMS): A test to check the face, arms, legs, neck, shoulders, and hips for any abnormal movements.

Facts

- Clozapine is available in:
 - Tablets and fast-disintegrating tablets
- This medicine works by decreasing:
 - Mood swings
 - Depression
 - Mania
 - Severe aggressive outbursts
 - Psychosis
 - Agitations
- Common side effects include:
 - Sedation/drowsiness
 - Dry mouth
 - Weight gain/increased appetite



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- Dizziness
- Stomach upset
- Occasional side effects (call the physician within one week):
 - Drooling
 - Inability to sit still or restlessness
 - Slowing of movements and making less facial expressions
 - Difficulty with sexual functioning
- Occasional but serious side effects (call the physician immediately):
 - Stiffness or muscle spasms in the tongue, jaw or neck
 - Seizures
 - Increased thirst and urination
- Very rare but extremely serious side effects (go to the emergency room immediately):
 - Stiffness, fever and confusion
 - Stiffness without breathing or swallowing
 - Fever, chills, sore throat, skin bruising or small spots (in rare cases this medication can cause a life threatening reduction in the number of white blood cells)
 - Tired all the time, changes in breathing, rapid heartbeat and/or chest pain (in rare cases this medication can cause heart complications)
- How the physician monitors this medicine:
 - Blood test to measure blood counts
 - Yearly blood test to measure blood sugar and fasting lipid panel (these medications can raise cholesterol and blood sugar)
 - AIMS test to check the face, arms, legs, neck, shoulders, and hips for any abnormal movements
 - Weight and abdominal measurements



Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Give medications as prescribed.
2. Watch for anything different/a change in status of the individual and for signs and symptoms of medication side effects.
3. Write down any noted signs and symptoms of medication side effects or changes in status of the individual.
4. Tell your supervisor or nurse about any noted signs and symptoms of medication side effects or changes in status of the individual immediately, according to the seriousness of symptoms as listed above or as per agency policy.
5. Seek medical attention as indicated according to the seriousness of symptoms as listed above or as per agency policy.
6. Watch for the effectiveness of medication by writing down target behavior data that relates to diagnosis.
7. Make sure AIMS is completed and results of AIMS and other information including weight is presented to physician or psychiatrist during scheduled appointments.

Learning Assessment

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

1. Clozapine is used to decrease:
 - A. Depression
 - B. Mania
 - C. Psychosis
 - D. All of the above



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2. Common side effects of clozapine include all of the following except:
 - A. Weight gain
 - B. Stomach upset
 - C. Weight loss
 - D. Sleepiness/sedation
3. Occasional side effects include:
 - A. Weight gain
 - B. Drooling
 - C. Restlessness
 - D. B and C
4. Physician monitoring of clozapine includes blood work for:
 - A. Blood sugar
 - B. Thyroid function
 - C. Blood count
 - D. Liver function
5. To help monitor the condition of someone receiving an antipsychotic medication, it is important to do all of the following except:
 - A. Watch for any changes in the individual
 - B. Write down observations of possible side effects of medications
 - C. Report to your supervisor on how the individual is doing every other month
 - D. Take target behavior and weight information to medical appointments for the physician/psychiatrist



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References

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Learning Assessment Answers

1. D
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. C