

# Psychotropic Medications in the Elderly

05-03-16

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## Antipsychotic Medications

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (maximum dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
Chlorpromazine	Largactil	75-400 (2000)		Lots of side effects
Clozapine	Clozaril	300-450 (900)	Atypical; low potency	Requires weekly blood test
Flupenthixol	Fluanxol	Depot: 20-40 (80 q2wks) Oral: 9-24 (24)	Low injection volume for depot; may help stabilize mood	
Fluphenazine decanoate	Modicate	Depot: 12.5-25 (100 mg q2wks)	Depot medications should be used only if there is no other way to obtain meds compliance	
Fluphenazine enanthate	Moditen	Depot: 25-100 (100 q2wks) Oral: 2.5-10 (20)		Modicate is preferable as depot medication (higher potency)
Haloperidol	Haldol	Depot: 100-300 (300 q4wks) Oral: 4-12 (20)	High-potency, thus few side effects except EPS. Safe; use dosages of 0.5-2 mg qd	
Loxapine	Loxapac	20-100 (250)		Relatively low potency
Mesoridazine	Serentil	150-400 (400)		obsolete
Methotrimeprazine	Nozinan	50-200 (400)	Useful to treat mania, as it is 2-3x as sedating as CPZ	
Olanzapine	Zyprexa	10-20 (20)	My favorite; improves sleep, good mood stabilizer.	Possibly highest weight gain & diabetes risk
Pericyazine	Neuleptil	20-100 (1000)		obsolete
Perphenazine	Trilafon	12-48 (64)		Quite anticholinergic
Pimozide	Orap	4-12 (20)	Possibly for Tourette's	Expensive!
Pipotiazine	Piportil L4	75-150 (250 q4wks)		Canada only
Prochlorperazine	Stemetil		May be Rx'd to treat nausea & vomiting, eg during cancer chemotherapy	Low potency; obsolete as an antipsychotic
Promazine	Sparine			obsolete
Quetiapine	Seroquel	300-600 (800)		Low potency, thus potential for side effects
Risperidone	Risperdal	2-6 (16)	Not sedating; low EPS	
Thiopropazine	Majeptil			obsolete

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generic name	trade name	typical dose range (maximum dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
Thioridazine	Mellaril	75-400 (800)		Can cause permanent skin discolouration & retinal problems
Thiothixene	Navane	15-30 (60)		Never really caught on
Trifluoperazine	Stelazine	6-20 (40)	Relatively potent, inexpensive	
Zuclopenthixol	Clopixol	Accuphase: 25-50 (150 q3days) Depot: 150-300 (400 q2wks) Oral: 20-100 (100)		Canada only

## Anticholinergic medications (to avoid extrapyramidal side effects of antipsychotics)

All the medications in this group (except amantadine) can cause constipation, dry mouth, tachycardia, confusion, urinary retention, and blurred vision.

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (max dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
amantadine	Symmetrel	100 bid (400/day)		indigestion, dizziness, insomnia
benztropine	Cogentin	1-2 bid (8/day)	can be given IM	long duration of action
biperiden	Akeniton	2 tid (40/day)		
diphenhydramine	Benadryl	25-50 tid-qid (200/day)	can be given IM; short duration of action	sedation
procyclidine	Kemadrin	2.5-5 bid-tid (30/day)		
trihexyphenidyl	Artane	2.5-5 tid (30/day)		

## Cholinesterase Inhibitors (for mild to moderate dementia)

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (max dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
donepezil	Aricept	5-10 qd	once daily dosing	
rivastigmine	Exelon	6-12 bid		
galantamine	Reminyl	16-24 bid		

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## Benzodiazepines

In general, these medications are to be avoided, as they can impair memory, increase risk of falls, cause more accidents, create dependence, and disinhibit behaviours.

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (max dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
alprazolam	Xanax	0.25-0.5 tid (4/day)		possibly more disinhibiting
bromazepam	Lectopam	6 bid		
chlordiazepoxide	Librium	25 bid		obsolete
clobazam	Frisium	10-20 qd-bid		Canada only
clonazepam	Rivotril	0.5 bid	effective against mania	long half-life: builds up in the brain
clorazepate	Tranxene	3.75 bid		obsolete
diazepam	Valium	2-10 bid-qid		
estazolam	ProSom	0.5-2 hs		U.S. only
flurazepam	Dalmane	15-30 hs		long half-life: builds up in the brain
halazepam	Paxipam	20-40 tid		U.S. only
lorazepam	Ativan			need to give every 4 hours to prevent rebound anxiety
oxazepam	Serax	10-30 tid-qid		
quazepam	Doral	7.5-15 hs		U.S. only
temazepam	Restoril	15-30 hs		
triazolam	Halcion	0.125 hs (0.25 max)	effective at a tiny dose (0.0625 mg)	usual doses can cause amnesia

## Mood Stabilisers (for bipolar affective disorder)

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (max dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
lithium	Eskalith	600-1800 qhs or tid	effective in mania; helps prevent both mania and depression	requires blood tests; dangerous if dose too high
divalproex sodium, valproic acid	Epival	750-3000 qhs or bid	low risk, easy to use	may see Parkinsonian side effects
carbamazepine	Tegretol	300-1600 qhs or bid	may also be effective vs violence	small risk of serious blood problems

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## Antidepressants

SSRIs can cause nausea, headaches, nervousness, akathisia, EPS, sweating, sexual dysfunction, loss of appetite. TCA side effects: anticholinergic (dry mouth, blurred vision, constipation, urinary retention, confusion); antihistaminic (drowsiness, weight gain); and anti-adrenergic (orthostatic hypotension, dizziness, tachycardia)

generic name	trade name	typical dose range (max dose)	reasons to use	reasons to avoid
amitriptyline	Elavil	75-200 (300)	for pain: 10-50 qhs	TCA; anti-ACh+++; sedating
amoxapine	Asendin	50-200 (300)		not available in Canada; may cause EPS, including tardive dyskinesia
bupropion	Wellbutrin SR	150-300 (400)		lowers seizure threshold
citalopram	Celexa	20-40 (60)	fewer drug interactions than other SSRIs	SSRI: drug interactions; discontinuation
clomipramine	Anafranil	75-225 (300)	effective in obsessive-compulsive disorder	TCA
desipramine	Norpramin	100-200 (300)	fewer side effects than other TCAs	TCA
doxepin	Sinequan	100-200 (300)		TCA
fluoxetine	Prozac	20-40 (80)		SSRI; long half-life
fluvoxamine	Luvox	100-200 (300)		SSRI
imipramine	Tofranil	100-200 (300)		TCA
maprotiline	Ludomil	75-150 (225)		TCA
mirtazapine	Remeron	15-45 (45)	improves sleep; may work faster	
moclobemide	Manerix	300-450 (600)		not available in U.S. (less safety data)
nefazodone	Serzone	300-500 (600)		visual disturbance
nortriptyline	Aventyl	75-150 (150)	may be more effective than other TCAs	may need blood levels measured to obtain effective dose
paroxetine	Paxil	20-40 (60)	activating	SSRI: drug interactions; discontinuation
phenelzine	Nardil	45-60 (90)		MAOI: requires strict dietary restrictions
protriptyline	Vivactil	30-60 (90)		not available in Canada
sertraline	Zoloft	50-100 (200)		SSRI: drug interactions; discontinuation
tranylcypromine	Parnate	20-40 (60)		MAOI: requires strict dietary restrictions
trazodone	Desyrel	100-300 (400)	for insomnia: 25-50 qhs	not effective against depression
trimipramine	Surmontil	100-250 (300)		TCA
venlafaxine	Effexor XR	75-150 (225)	SNRI; activating	may increase blood pressure