Psychiatric Pearls in the Primary Care Setting

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Talk Overview

- Brain Soup: What are the Neurotransmitters (and hormones) involved in brain health
- What if a patient only partially responds to an antidepressant
- What if an antidepressant stops working.
- What if a patient doesn’t respond to an antidepressant at all
- What are some natural treatment options
Depression Treatment Overview

- **STAR*D Trial**
  - Sponsored by the NIH and published in 2008
  - The largest antidepressant study ever conducted with over 120 journal articles published by study investigators.
  - Funded at a cost of 35 million US dollars.
  - Enrolled over 4,000 patients who screened positive for depression while seeking routine medical or psychiatric care.
STAR*D Take Home Messages

- Remission, not response, should be the goal of treatment as it is associated with a better prognosis and function.
- Should the first treatment fail, either switching treatment or augmenting the current treatment is reasonable.
- Since only 33% of the patients achieve remission after the first SSRI, most patients will require repeated trials of sufficiently sustained and vigorously dosed antidepressant.
- Patients should be given maximal but tolerable doses for at least 8 weeks before deciding that an intervention has failed.
- After two well-delivered medication trials, the likelihood of remission substantially decreases. Such patients likely require more complicated regimens and are best referred to a psychiatrist for more complex treatments.
Psychopharmacology – An Overview

- Neurotransmitters
  - Serotonin
  - Norepinephrine
  - Dopamine
  - GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid)
  - Glutamate

- Hormones
  - Adrenaline
  - Cortisol
  - Thyroid
Partial Response to an SSRI

- Give the antidepressant time to work
- Increase the dose
- Switch to a different SSRI
- Augment with a different agent (usually dopamine)
Partial Response, cont.

- Anti-happiness habits
- Different Dx (neurotransmitter)
- Anxiety/Angst
- Insomnia
- Genetics
- Diet/Inflammation
A Word About Benzos

- Daily, exclusive treatment using a bezo is for Bozos.
  - Can be addicting
  - Can develop tolerance
  - Withdrawal can initiate seizure activity
- Use a safer alternative
- Make the right diagnosis and treat it correctly
- If needed, use sparingly and infrequently
The SSRI Stops Working

- Non-compliance
- Habits
- Prefrontal Lobe Syndrome (poop out)
- Life Changes (stress)
- Lifestyle Changes (sleep)
No response to the SSRI

- Wrong Dx and/or neurotransmitter
- Habits
- Genetics
Natural Treatment Options*

- 5-HTp
- L-theanine
- Ashwagandha
- GABA
- Dl-phenylalanine
- Macuna purines (velvet bean)
- Saffron

* Use sites like Examine.com or Drugs.com to learn more about alternative treatments.
Questions