Bipolar Disorder Interventions

Bipolar disorder is a psychological disorder, leading to episodes of mania and depression in patients. Appropriate drug therapy for bipolar disorder includes lithium, valproic acid, or lamotrigine. Patients who are acutely manic may need hospitalization, and to be monitored for proper nutrition and hygiene. Those in a depressive episode need to be monitored for vegetative signs and may be given suicide precaution care.



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Drug Therapy

Lithium
Lithium-Battery
The mechanism of lithium is not fully understood, but this drug is a mood stabilizer. It helps prevent and treat the manic episodes of bipolar disorder by modulating the effects of neurotransmitters.

Valproic Acid (Valproate)
Vault-pro Acidic-lemon
Valproic acid is used to treat the manic episodes associated with bipolar disorder, and its mechanism of action is unclear. Side effects of valproic acid include liver disease and hypersensitivity.

Lamotrigine
Lamo-ghini
Lamotrigine is a drug helpful in treating bipolar disorder, though its exact mechanism of action is not fully understood. It can lead to hypersensitivity, and its use should be cautioned in those with renal and hepatic disease.

Manic Episode

Hospitalization
Hospital
Patients in acute or delirious mania may have clouding of consciousness and may have intense symptoms. Forced hospitalization may be necessary as they become a danger to themselves or others, and death may even occur without intervention. With hospitalization, patients can be medicated and monitored as their manic phase passes. This provides a controlled environment with low level stimuli and structured solitary activities. Management of care focuses on redirection of destructive and inappropriate behaviors. Restraint may also be necessary with these patients.

Nutrition
Nutritional-plate
As these patients have impaired functioning, they may not have had proper nutrition during their mania. Because of this, it is encouraged to help the patient consume sufficient finger-foods and between-meal snacks to meet nutritional requirements. High calorie, high carb foods that patients can “eat on the run” are encouraged until they are stabilized on medications. Increase fluids as they often become dehydrated due to excess activity. Consultation with a dietician may be necessary to determine the appropriate amount of calories.

Hygiene
Hygiene-products
As patients who are manic may neglect personal hygiene, it is important to help reintroduce them to necessary ADLs (activities of daily living). This helps the patient identify positive aspects about self and increase self-esteem.

Depressive Episode

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Monitor for Vegetative Signs

Monitor and Vegetables with vegetative signs

Monitoring for signs associated with hygiene deficiencies, decreased appetite, changes in sleeping patterns, eating, elimination, and sexual patterns as ‘vegetative signs’. This also includes watching for changes in concentration, activity level, social interaction, and awareness/care of physical appearance.

Suicide Precautions

Suicidal-jumper and Precaution-sign

As depression may lead to suicidal thoughts, additional precautions may be warranted. Patients may need to be hospitalized on a psychiatric unit, and be placed under close watch so that they do not harm themselves. While being monitored, these patients are administered the appropriate psychotherapy to help them recover from their condition. The patient should be placed on suicide precautions until deemed safe.

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