Antidepressant Discontinuation Syndrome

Antidepressant discontinuation syndrome refers to symptoms caused by abrupt withdrawal or dose reduction of antidepressants taken for at least 4 weeks. Remember the symptoms associated with this condition with the FINISH mnemonic. These symptoms include flu-like symptoms, insomnia, nausea, imbalance, sensory disturbances, and hyperarousal. The rate at which serotonin reuptake inhibitor treatment is terminated and the overall duration of treatment appear to be key factors playing a role in the development of symptoms of antidepressant discontinuation syndrome. Treatment consists of restarting the medication and gradual tapering.



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Symptoms

FINISH Mnemonic
FINISH-line
The FINISH mnemonic is helpful for remembering common symptoms associated with antidepressant discontinuation syndrome. It stands for Flu-like symptoms, Insomnia, Nausea, Imbalance, Sensory disturbances, and Hyperarousal.

Flu-Like Symptoms
Thermometer and Ice-bag
Flu-like symptoms such as fatigue, lethargy, muscle aches, headaches, sweating, and diarrhea are very common in this condition.

Insomnia
Taped-awake-insomniac
Insomnia is also a frequent manifestation of this condition, characterized by difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep. Patients may experience disrupted sleep patterns, contributing to heightened feelings of agitation and exacerbating other associated symptoms.

Nausea
Vomiting
Nausea and vomiting are manifestations of antidepressant discontinuation syndrome.

Imbalance
Unbalanced
Imbalance is common in patients with antidepressant discontinuation syndrome. Patients may experience difficulties with coordination and spatial awareness, impacting daily activities and increasing the risk of falls.

Sensory Disturbances
Sensors Disturbed
Sensory disturbances, such as numbness, tingling, or electric shock-like sensations, are some of the symptoms seen in antidepressant discontinuation syndrome.

Hyperarousal
Hiker-eyebrows
Hyperarousal frequently presents in cases of antidepressant discontinuation syndrome, featuring symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, agitation, aggression, manic episodes, and involuntary movements.

Treatment

Restart and Taper
Restart-button and Tape-dispenser
Treatment of this condition consists of restarting antidepressant therapy at the original dose, followed by a gradual tapering and discontinuation.

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