Prescribed drugs

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Information and references

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Overview

- Introduction
- Understanding effects of drugs
- Clinical practice and management
- Future opportunities
Introduction

- Information about prescribed drugs
- Books
- Internet
- Practitioners and patients
Introduction

- Books
- The Prescribed Drug Guide
- MIMS
- BNF
- Datasheet compendium
Introduction

- **Internet**
- www.drugs.com
- www.rxlist.com
- online.epocrates.com
- www.medicines.org.uk
Introduction

- **Internet**
- Alternative sites such as [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com)

run by Dr Joseph Mercola

- Or [www.wddty.com](http://www.wddty.com)

- [www.cchr.org.uk](http://www.cchr.org.uk) for psychiatric drugs
Introduction

- Practitioners and patients
  - Listen to the stories of patients
  - Use the experience of other practitioners
  - No text or Internet resource is the final word, it is only a guide
Introduction

- Drug names
- Generic
- Brand or trade name
- E.g. diazepam or Valium
Introduction

- Generic
- Betablockers - olol
- Statins - astatin
- Benzodiazepines - azepam
- ACE inhibitors - pril
Introduction

- Dosage
- How much
- Compare with usual dosage for that condition
- Don't confuse low dose with mild effect
- Compare like with like when considering dosage
Introduction

How is it administered?

- IV, IM, implanted
- Oral - syrup, tablet, capsule, slow release
- Rectal
- Vaginal
- Inhaled or nasal
- Skin
Introduction

- What is the drug used for?
- Contraindications
- Precautions
- Effects including adverse effects
- What terms are used?
Prescribed drugs

- Commonly used

Most of our patients take them

- 12% of women over 65 in US take >10
- 60% over 65 in Ireland take >2
- 10% of women in UK take antidepressants
Prescribed drugs

- Half of people in US take medications each month
- 30% take 2 or 3 each month
- 11% take 5 or more
- 1 in 10 children and 9 in 10 adults took a prescription medication in the past month
Prescribed drugs

- Common use = lots of money
- $157 billion for prescription drugs 2001 - USA
- $234 billion in 2008
- Commonest are asthma drugs in children, CNS stimulants in children, cholesterol lowering drugs, antidepressants
Prescribed drugs

How do they affect our practice?
Our practice

- Potential conflict with medical practitioner
- How can you make an accurate diagnosis?
- How do drugs interfere with your treatment?
- Treatment changes the person's condition
- Drug effects decline with dosage reduction
- Watch for drug withdrawal symptoms
Drugs and the patient

- Holistic view of drugs
- Consider as with any 'life-style choice'
- Adjust treatment appropriately particularly with herbs
- On-going management, advice and education
Drugs and holistic medicine

- What are their effects?
- Take them
- Compare with herbs
- Adverse effects
- Observation of patients
Dangers of prescribed drugs

- Numbers of adverse reactions
- Depends on drug
- Not accurately known
- Yellow card reporting
Adverse effects of prescribed drugs

- In general practice in Australia in 2006
- 10% had adverse drug reaction in previous 6 months - MJA 2006; 184 (7): 321-324
- Consistently under-reported
- If someone takes a drug, gets a symptom, that symptom goes away when drug is stopped and returns on resumption........
Clinical practice

- What do we do in our practice?
- How do we determine what is safe and appropriate?
- Dealing with the *ben* and the *biao* - root and branch
Strength of drugs

How strong is the prescribed drug?

How much does it suppress the symptoms?
Symptomatic use of 'symptom suppressors'
Level 2

Long-term use of 'symptom suppressors'
Sudden withdrawal of certain drugs is dangerous
Level 4

Severe mental/emotional disturbances
Level 5

Life-threatening disease
Herb-drug interactions


Herb-drug interactions

Patient management

- Your diagnosis is vital. Be clear what you are doing and why.
- What are drugs hiding?
- Dosage reduction – symptoms strengthen
- Use 10% rule as a guide
- More than 1 drug? Reduce strongest first
- For Level 5 drugs, you need medical supervision
Examples

- Valium 5mg three times daily Prozac 1 daily
- Stilnoct 1 each night
- Atenolol 50 mg daily Istin 5mg daily
- Simvastatin 20mg daily
- Glyceryl trinitrate when needed
- Insulin – dosage as required
- Frusemide 40mg twice daily
- Lipitor 20 mg daily Aspirin 75mg daily
- Augmentin 250mg three times daily
Specific drugs

- Name
- Uses
- Energetic actions
- How do we modify treatment principles?
- Cases
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID's)

- Used for arthritis, musculoskeletal problems
- Aspirin, Nurofen, Brufen, Voltarol, (Vioxx)
- Used as gel, oral, rectal
- Notorious for causing stomach problems - indigestion, heartburn, diarrhoea, peptic ulcer, bleeding and can kill (2000 per year in UK)
- Treat underlying condition and use safer alternatives
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID's)

- Compare to WindDamp herbs
- Warm and dispersing
- Disperse and weaken the Qi
- Dry and warm the Blood
- Long-term use leads to Yin Deficiency particularly Kidneys
Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID's)

- Compare to WindDamp herbs
- Warm and dispersing
- Disperse and weaken the Qi
- Dry and warm the Blood
- Long-term use leads to Yin Deficiency particularly Kidneys
- Link between NSAID use and renal impairment
Female sex hormones

- Oestrogen and progesterone
- Suppress natural production - ovaries, adrenals
- Think about general effect on endocrine system
- Often used for very little or no medical indications
- 30% of women 16-49 take 'pill' - 4 million
Female sex hormones

- Menopausal 'syndrome', oral contraception, acne
- Cold, affects Kidneys and Uterus, Spleen (digestion), Liver
- Think about protecting Kidney and Spleen Qi and Yang, resolving Dampness, regulating Liver Qi
Betablockers

- Block receptors which are affected by adrenaline
- Examples are propanolol, sotalol, timolol, atenolol, bisoprolol
- So, are calming, slowing, quieting
- People feel cold, tired
- Depression, impotence
Betablockers

- Hypertension, anxiety, tremor, heart disease
- Cold affecting all organs
- Settles Yang
- Think about Qi and Yang of all Zang organs
- Think about warming particularly Kidneys, digestion, Heart
ACE inhibitors

- ACE is angiotensin converting enzyme
- Renin-angiotensin system in kidneys
- Examples are enalapril (Vasotec), ramipril (Tritace), perindopril (Coversyl), lisinopril (Zestril)
ACE inhibitors

- Hypertension, heart failure
- Drying to the Lung and Liver, causes Heat in Liver and Stomach
- Moisten Lung and Liver, treat underlying imbalances which lead to original condition
- Look for dry cough (in 20%), headache, dizziness, tiredness, nausea, kidney impairment
Psychoactive medication

- Used to treat mental and/or emotional states
- Some symptoms can be severe such as psychoses, suicidal thoughts and feelings
- Diagnosis is made according to DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)
- Published by American Psychiatric Association
Psychoactive medication

- DSM categorises and labels psychological ‘disorders’
- This naturally leads to the medication considered to ‘treat’ such conditions
- Reflects a biochemical approach where psychological states are considered to be due to chemical imbalances in the brain
Psychoactive medication

- Robert Whitaker
  - [www.cchr.org.uk](http://www.cchr.org.uk)
- Peter Breggin
  - [www.antipsychiatry.org](http://www.antipsychiatry.org)
Psychoactive medication

- 4 groups of drugs
- Antidepressants
- Tranquillisers
- Lithium
- Anti-psychotics (neuroleptics)
Antidepressants

- 3 types
  - Mono-amine oxidase inhibitor
  - Tricyclic
  - SSRI - selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitor

- Use increased in UK by 234% in 10 years up to 2002
- In US, 11% women and 5% of men
Antidepressants

- Mono-amine oxidase inhibitor
- Examples are phenelzine (Nardil), selegilne (Eldepryl), tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- Problems with reactions to cheese, red wines (tyramine)
Antidepressants

- **Tricyclics**
  - Examples include amitryptyline (Elavil), clomipramine (Anafranil), doxepin (Sinequan), imipramine (Tofranil), trimipramine (Surmontil)
Antidepressants

- SSRI’s (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor)
- Examples include citalopram (Cipramil), escitalopram (Lexapro), fluoxetine (Prozac), paroxetine (Paxil), sertraline (Zoloft)
Antidepressants

- SNRI’s (serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor)
  - Examples include duloxetine (Cymbalta), venlafaxine (Effexor)
Antidepressants

- Depression, OCD, 'social' prescribing
- Heating to Liver and Heart
- Moisten and cool these organs
- Long-term think about effect on Kidney
- Lithium used for bipolar disorder (manic depression) – compare with tranquillisers
Antidepressants

Main adverse effects:

- Psychological including mania, insomnia, suicide (SSRI’s double the rate of suicide in children and adolescents)
- Weight gain – 5 to 25 Kg
- Withdrawal syndrome
Tranquillisers

- 'Major' used in psychoses
- 'Minor' used in neuroses
- Compare with metals and minerals which settle the Spirit
- Think about cooling and sedating effect on Qi of Heart and digestion
- Mucus with 'Major' TQ's – CNS damage
‘Minor’ Tranquillisers

- Anxiety, insomnia
- Benzodiazepines including chlordiazepoxide (Librium), clonazepam, diazepam (Valium), lorazepam (Ativan), alprazolam (Xanax)
- These are only for short term relief of severe and disabling anxiety - short term means 2 – 3 weeks
‘Minor’ Tranquillisers

- Related drugs include zaleplon (Sonata), zolpidem (Stilnoct), zopiclone (Zimovane)

- In 2000, 11.6% of Irish population using benzodiazepines (up from 8.7% in 1995)

- Report of the Benzodiazepine Committee, August 2002 Department of Health and Children
‘Minor’ Tranquillisers

- Main issue are with overprescribing – dose and duration
- Inappropriate prescribing
- Withdrawal syndromes
- Heat flares up when withdrawn
- Psychological support, herbs, acupuncture
‘Minor’ Tranquillisers

- Look at [www.benzo.org.uk](http://www.benzo.org.uk) – particularly Ashton manual
‘Major’ Tranquillisers

- Antipsychotics (neuroleptics)
- Powerful suppressors of thought
- Examples include chlorpromazine (Largactil), thioridazine (Melleril), trifluoperazine (Stelazine)
- haloperidol (Haldol, Serenace), droperidol (Droleptan)
‘Major’ Tranquillisers

- flupenthixol (Depixol, Fluanxol)
- clozapine (Clorazil) – needs weekly or biweekly full blood count
- risperidone (Risperdal)
- quetiapine (Seroquel)
‘Major’ Tranquillisers

- Adverse effects

- CNS damage, heart problems, weight gain, blood disorders, convulsions

- Withdrawal syndrome
Lithium

- Used in bipolar syndrome (manic depression or ‘major’ depression)
- Occasionally given in cases of ‘minor’ depression together with antidepressants
- Regular kidney and thyroid testing needed
- Care with dehydration
Lithium

- Main point is that it suppresses the euphoria of the manic episodes
- Treat underlying issues and psychological states
- Support digestion and Heart
Statins

- Reduce serum cholesterol
- Possible effect on incidence of IHD
- Heat Liver and Blood to dry Phlegm in Blood
- Look at supporting body fluids, cool Heart, support digestion, resolve mucus
- Educate regarding cholesterol and role in heart disease
Corticosteroids

- Inflammatory conditions and autoimmune diseases
- Heating, dispersing and toxic
- Think about short-term effects on Qi because of dispersing action
- Long-term causes damage to Yin and Blood
Bronchodilators

- Wheezing diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis
- Warm, dispersing – consider Ma Huang (ephedra)
- Dispersing action weakens Qi, particularly of Lung and Heart
- Warming action damages Yin
Antibiotics

- Infections - bacterial
- Widely used for any fever, signs of heat
- Cold, ?dries Damp
- Protect Spleen Qi, resolve Dampness
- Consider EPF remaining (Retained Pathogenic Heat)
Patient management

- Replace drug by your treatment
- Reduce slowly after initial improvement
- Wait
- Continue reduction, if appropriate
- Quicker reduction if mild condition, low dose, short duration, motivated patient
Liaison with doctors

- Drugs essential for life
- Life-threatening conditions
- Conditions requiring in-patient treatment
- Conditions with legal restrictions on treatment
Prescribed drugs are:

- A major cause of death and ill-health
- Expensive and will become increasingly so
Peak oil

Oil production gets harder and harder
Oil becomes more and more expensive
When will cheap oil end?
Saudi saying:
My father rode a camel, I drove a car,
my son flies an aeroplane, his son will ride a camel.
Conclusions & recommendations

Holistic medicine offers a choice which is:

- Effective
- Reliable
- Safe
- Cheap
Conclusions & recommendations

We need to be:

- Competent
- Well-trained
- Supported
Further information

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