Sleep Disorders: Effects of Medications on Sleep

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Objectives

1. Describe the effects of common over the counter sleep aids in the treatment of insomnia
2. Describe the effect of benzodiazepines and non-benzodiazepines for the treatment of insomnia
3. Describe the effects of orexin-receptor antagonists and melatonin receptor agonists for the treatment of insomnia
4. Evaluate when the use of FDA approved and non-FDA approved antidepressants are appropriate for the treatment of insomnia
5. Evaluate when the use of other classes of medications may be appropriate for the treatment of insomnia
### Insomnia Diagnostic Criteria

**One or more of:**
- difficulty initiating sleep
- difficulty maintaining sleep
- waking up earlier than desired
- resistance to going to bed on appropriate schedule
- difficulty sleeping without parent or caregiver intervention

**One or more of:**
- fatigue/malaise
- attention, concentration, or memory impairment
- mood disturbance/irritability
- daytime sleepiness
- behavioral problems
- reduced motivation/energy/initiative
- proneness for errors/accidents
- concerns about or dissatisfaction with sleep

1. Complaints not explained by inadequate opportunity or circumstances
2. Sleep disturbance and associated daytime symptoms occur at least 3 times/week
3. Sleep/wake difficulty not better explained by another sleep disorder

**Short-term:**
- Present for less than 3 months

**Chronic:**
- Present for more than 3 months

### Highest Prevalence of Insomnia

- Women
- Elderly
- Those with coexisting medical disorders
- Those taking specific medications or withdrawing from hypnotics or alcohol
Nonprescription medications

Antihistamines
Melatonin
Alcohol
Marijuana

Benzodiazepines

• Temazepam
Non-benzodiazepines

- Eszopiclone
- Zaleplon

Newer Medication Options

Orxin-receptor antagonist
  - suvorexant
Melatonin receptor agonists
  - ramelteon
Antidepressants

- FDA approved
  - doxepin
- Non-FDA approved
  - Mirtazapine
  - trazodone

When to use other classes of medications?

- Antipsychotics: quetiapine
- Anticonvulsants: gabapentin
- Barbiturates: Do not use for insomnia
Guidelines for Medications for Chronic Insomnia

1. Treatment goals and expectations
2. Safety concerns
3. Potential side effects and drug interactions
4. Other treatment modalities
5. Potential for dosage escalation
6. Rebound insomnia

Patients should be followed on a regular basis
Efforts should be made to:
- employ the lowest effective maintenance dose
- taper medication when conditions allow
- ensure good sleep hygiene practices
- cognitive and behavioral therapy for insomnia
References

• 2. Annuals of internal medicine, 2014, In the clinic, 161(4), ITC-1