

1-126 Sexual dysfunction

TIPS Question:

Which antipsychotic medication has been extensively studied in the elderly population and has also been shown to be effective in treating inappropriate sexual behaviours/disinhibition in a resident diagnosed with dementia.

Response:

Which antipsychotics have been extensively studied in elderly?

Antipsychotics are used for many purposes in the elderly with psychiatric illness. These include psychosis and behavioural disturbances in dementia, psychotic depressions and late onset schizophrenia among others.

Antipsychotic treatment has been more extensively studied in dementia with behavioural problems, most notably Risperidol followed by Olanzapine and seroquel, i.e. the atypicals. We are continually learning about their use - both dosages, side effect tolerability and effectiveness but much more research is needed. The largest trials have to date been with risperidol but this does not mean the others are not just as effective, they have just not been studied.

In respect to antipsychotics and sexual disinhibition no good trials exist to my knowledge. Antipsychotics can sometimes be useful in decreasing the disinhibited behaviour but we do not know if one medication is better than another.

Other psychotropics have been used for sexual disinhibition in dementia where risk is high. Those include SSRI taking advantage of their effect on decreasing sexual interest; testosterone suppressing agent such as cypertone acetale and progesterone agents such as depo provera. In most cases, however, a comprehensive approach using the Six-Question template is more successful in addressing this issue.

Please note: TIPS information should be used similar to the way you would use information from a text book! TIPS is not intended to serve as an individual consultation service! P.I.E.C.E.S. participants should use this information in context and always work closely with the family physician involved in the care of the resident or client and with other Partners In Care to find solutions to individual resident/client issues.