

DRUG PROFILE

ANTIPSYCHOTICS IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract : Prescription of antipsychotics has increased over the last few years. Their indications extend beyond schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and has found a place in the management of autism spectrum disorder and Tourette syndrome. Selection of antipsychotics should be individualised for each child. An understanding of the adverse effects of this group of drugs is essential for proper monitoring and follow up of children and adolescents on these drugs.

Keywords: 1st generation antipsychotic, 2nd generation antipsychotic, Atypical antipsychotic, Medication, Children, Adolescents, Safety, Efficacy.

Points to Remember

- *Antipsychotic medications are effective in treating several psychiatric conditions in children and adolescents. Although not curative, they allow adequate control of clinical symptoms in lifelong psychiatric ailments.*
- *Antipsychotics result in a number of adverse effects in this population and different agents present highly variable safety profiles. Therefore, prescribing of these drugs involves a difficult balance between the need to relieve mental disease symptoms and the risk of drug-induced toxicity.*
- *SGAMs overall dominate prescribing preferences but FGAMs are still prescribed in the youngest in varying proportions.*
- *Children under 9 years old on antipsychotics ('off label') should be carefully monitored as the risk/benefit ratio of these medications remains unclear especially in the youngest.*
- *A multi-disciplinary team including the pediatrician, the child psychiatrist and clinical psychologist need to hand hold the child and the family together while monitoring the progress of therapies. Counselling of the adolescent and the caregivers, by this team, regarding the goals to be achieved, medication used at various stages of disease, dose adjustments and early recognition of developing side-effects, are an integral part of management of these children.*

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