Antipsychotic Drug Use and Dementia

Are these drugs really necessary?
These drugs were not developed to control behaviors with dementia, so why use them for such?

Review the Side Effects of Antipsychotic Medication for Dementia

- Some antipsychotics cause a decrease in white blood cell production that can lead to serious infections.
- Some antipsychotics can cause a decrease in blood pressure when changing positions. They can also cause dizziness, rapid heart rate and drowsiness.
- Antipsychotics can cause irreversible, involuntary muscle movements.
- Antipsychotics can cause weight gain, cataracts, increased concentration of cholesterol and triglycerides and increased blood sugar levels.

Antipsychotic Medications are for Major Psychiatric Illnesses

- Antipsychotic medications are for managing major psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia.
- The scientific benefit for use of these medications for Alzheimer’s disease or dementia has not been established.
- These medications have side effects that can cause weight gain, a rise in blood sugar, irregularities of the heart and increased cholesterol levels.
- They also significantly increase the risk of death in an older person.
- In older nursing home residents with dementia, the use of antipsychotic medications increases the relative risk of death by 70 percent.¹

Antipsychotics are not for Dementia

- For every 100 residents with dementia treated with antipsychotic medications, only 9-25 will benefit and 1 will die.²
- Many nursing home residents with dementia are prescribed antipsychotic medication to control behaviors, but it only sedates them.
- The actual cause of a disruptive behavior is rarely discovered or documented prior to starting antipsychotic medications.

Each nursing home provides unique solutions for families of residents with dementia. See what your home can do to help you and your loved one today.


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