

## Can Schizophrenia be Treated?

Some early treatments for schizophrenia included:

- Insulin coma therapy
- Prefrontal lobotomy
- Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)

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## How about a pill?

◆ *Neuroleptics* (anti-psychotics) were help people with schizophrenia think more clearly and reduce or eliminate hallucinations and delusions.

- Reduce the *positive symptoms* but are less effective in controlling the negative and disorganized symptoms (Potkin et al., 1993).

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## Antipsychotic Medications

◆ These are the most commonly prescribed for people with schizophrenia, as well as anti-depressants or mood stabilizers.

- Approximately 50-70% of patients will show improvement to some degree.

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### Non-compliance with meds

- ◆ Despite the effectiveness of antipsychotic medications, many patients are not compliant with taking the medication.
  - Approximately 7% of patients prescribed antipsychotic medication refuse to take it (Hoge et al., 1990).
- ◆ Research shows that 3 out of 4 patients stop taking their medication from time to time (Weiden et al., 1991).

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### WHY do patients refuse medication?

- ◆ There are a number of factors that influence non-compliance:
  - Negative side effects that produce unwanted physical symptoms
  - Negative patient-doctor relationships
  - Costs of medication
  - Poor social support
- ◆ Hopefully compliance rates will improve with the introduction of injectable medications, rather than taking oral medication.

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### What are the risks?

- ◆ These drugs impact neurotransmitter systems, which produce more serious, extrapyramidal symptoms.
  - These symptoms include motor difficulties similar to those experienced by patients with Parkinson's disease (Parkinsonian symptoms)

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## Extrapyramidal Symptoms

• *Tardive Dyskinesia* produces involuntary movements of the tongue, face and mouth.

- These present as protrusions of the tongue, puffing of the cheeks, puckering of the mouth and chewing movements.
- This results from long-term use of antipsychotics and is irreversible



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## New medications

• Since the 1990's new medications help those who did not respond to earlier antipsychotic medications and they tend to have fewer side effects (Davis, et al., 2003).

• Most commonly prescribed:

- Clozapine
- Risperdone
- Olanzapine

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## What are the alternatives?

• Patients often fail to return to clinics and hospitals for follow-up, which make psychosocial interventions a necessity in treatment.

- Traditional therapy
- Behavioral family therapy
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Self-advocacy
- Psychosocial clubs

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### Wrap it up...

- There are many treatments for this disorder, but because it is such a complex one treatment must be carried out at all levels.
- One approach alone is not sufficient to address the many needs of people with schizophrenia

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### Next Class...

- We will discuss treatments for schizophrenia

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