

Psychopharmacology #5:
The challenges of mixed states
Mood/Anxiety/Substance Abuse/ Sleep
disorders

A.M.B.E.R. clinic
Albuquerque Multidisciplinary Behavioral Evaluation for Recovery
and Resiliency

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Overview

- **What are we trying to deal with?**
- **The challenge of repetitive diagnostic unpeeling**
- **Additive pharmacology: methods and risk**
- **Evaluating hypotheses,
evaluating outcomes**

What are we dealing with?

- **Behavioral dyscontrol**
 - **Danger to SELF, danger to OTHERS**
- **Unrecognized cognitive processing**
- **Sleep deprivation**
- **Competing sensory inputs**
- **Awareness/insight?**

Repetitive Unpeeling

- **Record symptoms of greatest distress**
- **History, setting of remission/exacerbation**
- **Any treatments tried; duration & effects**
- **Is most evident symptom a reaction to a different feeling state or cognitive processing?**
 - **TBI**
 - **Intellectual disability**
 - **Developmental disability; syndromes**

Repetitive Unpeeling

- **First diagnosis**
 - **May need to receive treatment, even if response to an underlying threat or condition**
- **Second diagnosis**
 - **Medications have to be compatible with prior medications**
 - **May drive superficial presentation**
- **More diagnoses?... When is enough?**

Additive Pharmacology

- **Monotherapy**
- **Lowest dose with clinical response**
- **Side effects**
 - **sedation**
 - **involuntary movements**
 - **muscle cramps/weakness**
 - **fatigue**
 - **headache**

Additive Pharmacology

- **Primary disorder identified**
 - **Anxiety: pharmacologic and behavioral strategies**
 - **Depression: address major complaint of patient**
 - **Cognitive processing deficits**
 - **Impulsivity: AEDs; alpha/beta blockers; ?antipsychotics**
- **Augmentation strategies**

Additive Pharmacology

- **Hepatic metabolism**
- **Sedation → confusion/delirium**
- **Ataxia; risk for falls**
- **Correct dosing**
 - **Patient knows what they are taking**
 - **Minimized peaks and valleys**
 - **Not interfering with sleep**
 - **Monitoring, if available**

Additive Pharmacology

- **Risks**
- **Consent: informed v. informal**
- **New symptoms (unanticipated)**
- **Lethality:**
 - **Suicide assessment**
 - **Drug-drug interactions**
 - **Need to anticipate needs for support**

Evaluate

- **Hypothesis**
 - **What worked about it?**
 - **How is it not helpful in improving patient's function, now?**
- **Outcomes**
 - **Realistic measures of improved function**
 - **Increased communication**
 - **Patient engagement**

Evaluation

- **Generate new hypotheses that better explain current symptoms**
- **Perspectives:**
 - **Seek multiple care-giver points of view**
 - **Use concrete, repeated behavior**
 - **Look for joy, recovery, hope --- mental flexibility**

Summary

- **Delicate clinical balance**
- **Document trials, directions, intentions**
- **Re-evaluate when working or not working**
- **Get patient to describe experiences**
- **Goal: symptom relief for improved function**