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EXPERT ROUNDTABLE SUPPLEMENT

BIPOLAR DEPRESSION: BEST PRACTICES FOR THE OUTPATIENT

AUTHORS

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ABSTRACT

Although certain aspects of bipolar disorder are well understood, there is a need for more information concerning management of acute bipolar depression, the effect of comorbid conditions, and long-term management of bipolar disorder. The outpatient presenting with bipolar disorder often presents with many of the key problems related to the long-term course of the disorder, including misdiagnosis and treatment non-adherence. Depressive symptoms are also prevalent during the course of bipolar disorder, with studies finding that depression can cause a low-grade “darkness” that longitudinally affects outpatients with bipolar disorder. These variable and persistent depressive symptoms may cause severe functional impairment and increased suicidality. Pharmacologic treatment of bipolar disorder typically includes anti-manic and mood-stabilizing medication. Although some studies find antidepressants have some positive effect, researchers have found that antidepressants, including selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, when used as monotherapy or in conjunction with mood stabilizers, have little benefit for the treatment of bipolar disorder and may increase the likelihood of a switch into mania, hypomania, or mixed episodes. For long-term outpatient treatment, lamotrigine and lithium are proven to be highly effective. However, clinicians should also stress psychosocial treatment approaches, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, as a principle of chronic disease management for long-term outpatients. Data on pharmacotherapy and psychosocial treatments are emerging, and clinicians should integrate these two treatment options into the standard of care.

This expert roundtable supplement focuses on the treatment and management of the bipolar outpatient at risk for a depressive relapse as well as patients experiencing both acute and long-term symptoms of the disorder. Two case studies are presented to elucidate the best practices for the varying clinical states of bipolar disorder.

BIPOLAR DEPRESSION: BEST PRACTICES FOR THE OUTPATIENT

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This activity has been approved to provide 1 hour of CE for case managers by the Commission for Case Manager Certification (CCMC).

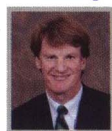
Target Audience

This activity is designed to meet the educational needs of physicians, pharmacists, nurses, psychologists, and case managers.

Learning Objectives

- List medication regimens utilized in the outpatient management of patients with bipolar depression
- Identify clinical strategies used to treat the outpatient with bipolar depression presenting with common symptoms, including psychosis, anxiety, substance abuse, and mixed mania
- Recognize medication and nonmedication strategies used in the long-term management of euthymic outpatients with a history of severe depressive episodes

Faculty Affiliations and Disclosures



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To Receive Credit for this Activity

Read this expert roundtable supplement, reflect on the information presented, and take the CME quiz on page 14. Complete the answer form and evaluation on page 15 and return it to: i3 CME, 180 Regent Court, Suite 50, State College, PA 16801.

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