

Module 2: Pharmacology of Medications

TIP Chapter 3

- Identify key factors in the pharmacology of some medications used for opioid addiction treatment
- Describe the characteristics of medications, using buprenorphine as an example
- Review common drug interactions
- Review side effects

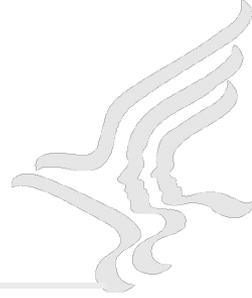


Pharmacotherapeutic Medications for Opioid Addiction Treatment



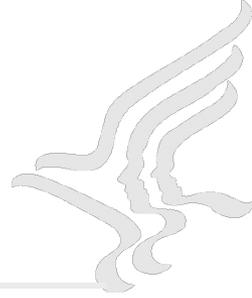
- Methadone: Most frequently used, long-acting, has many formulations, decreases pain-killing effects of opioids, available in OTPs
- Buprenorphine: Larger doses do not increase effects, has increased margin of safety, administered in doctor's offices and healthcare settings
- Buprenorphine-naloxone: Combination of 2 medications, administered in doctor's offices and healthcare settings
- Naltrexone: Does not have abuse potential; blocks effects of heroin, morphine, methadone; can cause withdrawal in non-abstinent patients; administered in OTPs and doctor's

Methadone: Physical Pathways



- Methadone is metabolized by an enzyme system that can be affected by other medications.
- These other medications can change the levels of opioid medications or cause withdrawal.
- Some of these other medications include psychiatric medications.
- Methadone can increase serum levels of some antidepressants.
- Medications for HIV infection and seizures may speed transformation of methadone.

Methadone: Common Interactions

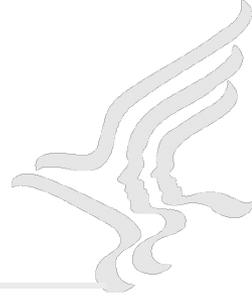


- Example 1: Fluvoxamine
 - Increases SMLs and increases opioid effects

- Example 2: Nevirapine
 - Decreases SMLs and opioid effects; case reports of severe withdrawal symptoms

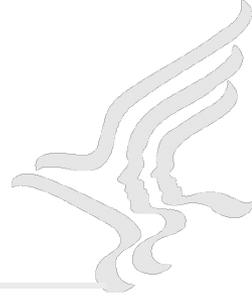
- Example 3: Sertraline
 - Increases SMLs, but no reported side effects

Recommendations: Preventing Drug Interactions



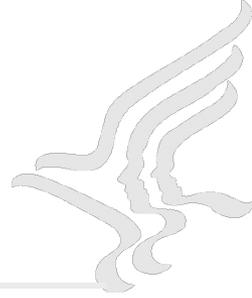
- Take steps to reduce the likelihood of drug interactions
- Obtain a thorough drug and medication history
- Start with low doses, increase slowly, and monitor closely
- Stay updated on medication interactions

Educating Patients About Drug Interactions



- Educating patients about drug interactions is essential.
- Respiratory depressants may be fatal.
- Cardiovascular risk factors may be increased or reduced by opioid agonist pharmacotherapy.
- Other drugs, whether illegal or legal, can cause drug interactions.

Minimizing Drug Interactions



- Substitute alternative medications
- Select medications with the least potential for interaction
- Be aware that the more complicated the medication regimen, the less likely patients will follow it
- Ask patients about preexisting diseases or cardiovascular conditions
- See page 41 for more suggestions