

S-402 ANTIPSYCHOTICS FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS IN CARE OF VALORIS



Version 2 effective January 23, 2014

(previously DG-15)

Policy

This directive applies to children and adults in care (court mandated) and to adults in our residential services. The files of other children, youth and adults receiving services from Valoris may be directed to the sociomedical team for review, with the permission of the parents, guardians or decision-makers.

Several Canadian studies indicate a significant increase in the prescription of antipsychotics (e.g. *Olanzapine, Clozapine, Risperidone and Quetiapine, Largactil, and Haldol*) for children (under 18 years of age). Those powerful and potentially dangerous drugs are prescribed by general practitioners / family doctors, and given to children for a range of diagnoses that are not approved by Health Canada. In particular, studies have shown that those drugs are often prescribed for children between 6 and 18 years of age (more frequently for boys) for hyperactivity, opposition and anxiety, even insomnia. Studies show that antipsychotics are not the best therapeutic approach to those problems.

Moreover, those drugs are harmful and may have significant side effects in children, including rapid weight gain, high blood pressure, diabetes, extrapyramidal and other side effects. The extrapyramidal side effects of neuroleptics are undesirable physical and psychological manifestations that can be reversed through progressive elimination of the treatment or corrected by certain medications. The undesirable side effects can include movement disruptions, impatience, akathisia and significant tremors.

Once they reach adulthood, those people may end up suffering from cardiovascular diseases (heart attacks and strokes). As well, those drugs interfere with normal development in children.

We are deeply concerned about the potential for significant side effects of antipsychotic drugs on the health of children and adults.

Procedure

1. Every new prescription for an antipsychotic shall be reviewed and approved by the sociomedical team.

2. The name of every person who currently has a prescription for an antipsychotic shall be reported to the sociomedical team, which will review that person's medication in order to ensure that the person is safe and that the medication is effective.
3. The sociomedical team will review the files of children and adults in care who have a prescription for antipsychotics in order to seek alternatives to the prescribed drugs and to make recommendations to the family doctors and specialists.
4. To that end, case workers shall promptly forward the names of those children and adults to the employee providing administrative support to the sociomedical team so that a review schedule can be drawn up.
5. Clinical staff may consult the sociomedical team about any medication issue.

Definitions

Annexe(s)

- List of atypical antipsychotics
- List of typical antipsychotics

References