Module Name: Psychopharmacology
Module Code: NU2P05
ECTS: 5
No. of Hours: Lectures: 20
Term: Hilary
Assessment Date: Weeks 37-38
Module Leader: Louise Doyle
Lecturers: Louise Doyle and Brian Keogh

Aims

The aim of this module is to provide students with an introduction to the key principles underpinning psychopharmacology in contemporary mental health nursing practice. Throughout this module the emphasis is placed on the psychotropic medications commonly used in mental health practice and the role of the nurse in their administration, the monitoring of their effects, contraindications and side effects and adverse effects. This module will also provide students with an awareness of the issues surrounding the use of psychiatric medication to alleviate mental distress.

Learning Outcomes

Following completion of this module the student should be able to:

- Explain the mode of action, desired effects, contraindications and side effects of the main drugs commonly used to treat mental illness
- Discuss the role of the nurse in the pharmacological treatment of people with mental illness in hospital and community settings
- Discuss the role of the pharmacy industry in the treatment of mental illness and the response of mental health professionals and service providers.
- Discuss the benefits and risks associated with using pharmacological treatments in the care of people with a mental illness.

Indicative Content

- Pharmacokinetics/pharmacodynamics: explanation of the basic principles of how psychiatric drugs work, their desired effects and their possible side-effects in particular: anti-psychotics, anti-depressants and other mood stabilisers, anxiolytics and hypnotics, anti-cholinergics and drugs used to treat dependency
- Role of the nurse in psychopharmacology: monitoring and assessing psychiatric drug effects and side effects, promoting concordance, recognition of catastrophic incidents (neuroleptic malignant syndrome, lithium toxicity and serotonin syndrome) and intervening appropriately.
- The marketing of mental illness. Pharmaco-centrism in psychiatry and mental health nursing.
- Improvements and advancements in psychopharmacology. Problems with pharmacological treatment including pharmacological abuse, issues with consent and drug-induced injury.
Teaching and Learning Activities

- Lectures
- Directed learning

Student Effort Hours

- 100

Assessment

Mode of Assessment Unseen Examination

Assessment Details 2 hours
Answer 2 out of 3 questions

Reading List

Essential Reading


Recommended Reading


Lakeman, R. (2010). Mental Health Nursing is not for sale: rethinking nursing’s relationship with the pharmaceutical industry. 17 (2), 171-177