2010

Integrating “Personality” into Psychopharmacotherapy Instruction in a Pharmacy Curriculum

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Integrating “Personality” into Psychopharmacotherapy Instruction in a Pharmacy Curriculum

Abstract

BACKGROUND: Recent survey results found that course content for psycho-pharmacotherapy across various schools of pharmacy focused mainly on depression, schizophrenia, general anxiety and bipolar disorders. In order to meet the demands of patient populations with co-morbid and pervasive personality disorders (PD), it may behoove pharmacy faculty to integrate PD into the curriculum using story-line case scenarios and group activities including PD.

OBJECTIVE: Patient cases and creative group assignments featuring patients with various integrated medical co-morbidities, psychiatric diagnoses, PD, functional / social stressors, and education/prognostic information were used to increase students’ exposure to, and knowledge of, PD.

METHODS: Students were exposed to story-line cases in lecture and given instructions on how to create a patient case addressing components of the five different axes used in psychiatry: Axis I (major psychiatric presentations); Axis II (PD); Axis III (medical diagnoses); Axis IV (functional limitations and stressors); and, Axis V (score for Global Assessment of Functioning) as part of a longitudinal group project.

RESULTS: Students were assessed using questions focusing on the domains of: commonly taught psychiatric topics; communication and health literacy; and, PD.

Disciplines
Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

Comments
Presented at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy 2010 Annual Meeting.

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Integrating “Personality” into Psychopharmacotherapy
InSTRUCTION IN A PHARMACY CURRICULUM
David G. Fuentes, PharmD BCPP CGP
Pacific University Oregon School of Pharmacy – College of Health Professions

Introduction

BACKGROUND: Recent survey results found that course content for psycho-pharmacotherapy across various schools of pharmacy focused mainly on depression, schizophrenia, general anxiety and bipolar disorders. In order to meet the demands of patient populations with co-morbid and pervasive personality disorders (PD), it may behoove pharmacy faculty to integrate PD into the curriculum using story-line case scenarios and group activities including PD.

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RESULTS: Students were assessed using questions focusing on the domains of: commonly taught psychiatric topics; communication and health literacy; and, PD.

Methods

• Students were presented with story-line case scenarios featuring patients based on faculty member’s psychiatric practice experience and meet knowledge requirements for psychiatric specialty board certification
• The group assignment challenged them to use at least the following to create a patient case to present to their peers:
  A. One Axis I Disorder (example: Bipolar Disorder II)
  B. One Axis II Disorder (example: Histrionic personality)
  C. Three Axis III Disorders (examples: Hypertension, Diabetes Mellitus type II, HIV infection)
  D. One Axis IV (example: legal stressors)
  E. One comment on Axis V (discussing global functioning - ability to care for self independently)

• Students were given an instruction template useful in integrating the following into their patient cases:
  A. Chief Complaint
  B. History of Present Illness
  C. Past Medical History
  D. Meds Prior to Admission
  E. Allergies / Intolerances
  F. Medication Use History
  G. Labs / Objective data
  H. Comments on Pt Goals

• Students presented their cases to their colleagues and the professor with the goal of discussing treatment possibilities and took an all-inclusive course exam.

Discussion

• Integrating PD and rarer topics e.g., anorexia nervosa, malingering, factitious disorders, somatization disorders, sociopathic hypochondriasis, was possible in a 6-day (36-hour) psychopharmacotherapy course using patient case scenarios, and group projects.

The total time dedicated to these topics < 8 hours (22%) of the entire course.

• Students achieved an aggregate average of ≥89.5% competency in both PD and traditional areas assessed in pharmacy education. Samples of assessment questions consistent with each area are shown below (Table 2).

Conclusions

• The top 25% of the class consistently achieved a greater average performance score on all questions on the assessment compared to their cohorts at the bottom 25% of the class.

• All student groups (n = 14) correctly integrated Axis II personality disorders and rarer conditions in their patient case (similar to the one show here).

• Including PD does not have to compromise, and may even help solidify, interest and learning in topics presented in a psychopharmacology course.

Future Implications: Students may use the knowledge of, and exposure to, PD in a psycho-pharmacotherapy course as a foundation to help them approach the changing role of the pharmacist in psychiatric practice areas and meet knowledge requirements for psychiatric specialty board certification in the future.

Contact Information

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Table 2: Sample Items for Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Personality Items</th>
<th>Traditional Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patient being treated for obsessive-compulsive disorder is also diagnosed with schizotypal personality disorder. He is being discharged today. Which of these can be effective treatment options?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo is a 23 year female using lamotrigine. She has benefited from this medication but has been experiencing side effects. She wants to get it over and isdestressed with her provider, who added valproic acid back to her current regimen based on her presentation consistent with rapid cycling. Which of the following BEST describes the use of these 2 medications as mood stabilizers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Case Questions:

Discuss the Case with your colleagues and work together to discuss the following:

1. Possible treatment (pharmacological and non-pharmacological) options
2. Identification of adherence barriers specific to this patient
3. How you might approach her given her possible personality disorders (from the narrative and case)

Please be prepared to present your findings to the class after 10 minutes.