



Algorithm B

Avoiding Use of More than One Atypical Antipsychotic (AAP) Medication in Children Under 18 Years of Age

PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES

- Prescribing more than one AAP medication is not recommended for the following reasons:
 - There is little to no evidence that it is advantageous in children and adolescents.
 - Increased risk of side effects and drug interactions.
 - Increases difficulty to assess drug efficacy, safety and tolerability.
 - Impairs a clinician's ability to identify the cause and manage adverse reactions (e.g., tardive dyskinesia, extrapyramidal symptoms).
- May reflect a lack of diagnostic clarity in an attempt to treat difficult symptoms or side effects.
- Consult PPN/specialist if contemplating prescribing a second, simultaneous AAP medication.
- The potential benefits and risks of psychotropic medication use must be weighed against the risks of untreated illness.
- Caution is recommended in prescribing psychotropic medications to children and adolescents given that their long term consequences are poorly understood.

B.1.

While the simultaneous use of AAP medications is not recommended, it is sometimes necessary to transition a patient from one medication to another (cross tapering).

B.2.

Is the current medication ineffective?

B.3.

Is the current medication causing intolerable side effects?

B.4.

Is the current medication cost prohibitive for the family?

Answer to at least one

YES

Answer to all

NO

B.5.

Wean off medication or cross taper to a new medication over no more than six weeks.
(See AAP Adverse Effect Table.)

B.6.

Maintain current medication.

2B.1.

New patients on two or more AAP medications.

2B.2.

Obtain patient medical records if available.

YES →

2B.3.

Take medication history and determine which medication was initiated first.

NO ↓

2B.4. INTERVIEW

Question patient/family to determine which medication was initiated first.

Evaluate why additional medications were prescribed.

Evaluate patient/family perception of each medication's effects and side effects.

2B.5.

Complete diagnostic assessment.

2B.6.

Does the assessment reveal target symptoms and/or a diagnosis that suggests antipsychotic medications may be helpful?

YES

2B.7. EVALUATE PATIENT FOR ADVERSE EFFECTS

- Check height, weight, BMI and waist circumference.
- Check pulse and blood pressure.
- Assess for abnormal and involuntary movement.
- Consider fasting blood sugar and lipid profile.
- If indicated, EKG, A1C hemoglobin test or check prolactin.

2B.8.

Make clinically informed decision to select single most effective medication.

2B.9.

Utilize weaning or cross-tapering process to discontinue the unnecessary medication(s). If breakthrough symptoms occur, consult PPN/specialist.

NO

LEGEND

