

SUMMARY

Prevention and treatment of somatic complications arising from the use of antipsychotics – W. Cahn, D. Ramlal, R. Bruggeman, L. de Haan, F.E. Scheepers, M.M. van Soest, J. Assies, C.J. Slooff –

BACKGROUND Antipsychotics are effective drugs that are prescribed frequently for a large group of patients. However, they also have many side-effects which can lead ultimately to serious somatic complications. These complications fall into various categories: metabolic, cardiovascular, neurobiological, haematological, gastro-intestinal and urogenital.

AIM To make an inventory of the side-effects and advise on ways of monitoring and preventing them.

METHOD The multidisciplinary working group on somatic complications arising from the use of antipsychotics (Werkgroep Somatische Complicaties) has collected literature on the subject and has discussed it at a number of consensus meetings.

RESULTS The most frequent somatic complications are described on the basis of specific risk profiles and advice is given on how to identify these complications and on how to treat them when necessary. It is essential to monitor, systematically and regularly, somatic complications arising from the use of antipsychotics; furthermore, polypharmacy should be avoided. The person ultimately responsible for this is the doctor who has prescribed the antipsychotics. In addition, it is important to draw patients' attention to the general rules for a healthy lifestyle: no smoking, a balanced diet and adequate exercise.

CONCLUSION It is very important that somatic complications should be monitored carefully and accurately. So far, the Netherlands has no official guidelines on ways to identify and treat somatic complications.

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KEY WORDS antipsychotics, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, monitoring, movement disorders, obesity