

## **Some Thoughts on Meds...not definitive, please consult YOUR MD...**

### **Antidepressants (SSRIs and SNRIs)**

Can you safely find short-term relief from depression in a pill? The answer is yes for most people. However, long-term use often results in a well-documented “paradoxical effect,” causing clinical worsening and suicidal thoughts. I would avoid the SNRIs (e.g. Cymbalta) at all costs, they are miserably impractical to stop.

### **Mood Stabilizers**

I would not take them unless I had no choice. Bipolar disorder is rampantly misdiagnosed, with more plausible causes than mental illness. In general, my biggest concerns with all mood stabilizers are 1) liver toxicity, 2) significant weight gain and 3) thyroid issues, when taken for a long time.

### **Benzodiazepines (Mild Tranquilizers)**

If you can take five milligrams of Valium (Diazepam) once or twice a month for severe anxiety or insomnia, it may do more good than harm; but this class is highly addictive, notorious for chemical dependency and rebound anxiety, with a mounting causal link to dementia. If I could ban Xanax, I would.

### **Nonbenzodiazepines or Z-Drugs**

I would never touch one again, but I recognize others will. This class includes Ambien (zolpidem), Lunesta and Restoril among others. Again, if you can take no more than five milligrams once or twice a month, you may be okay; but they are not prescribed that way. I have interacted with many people with horror stories about these drugs and withdrawal, even after short-term usage. Please never mix with alcohol even in small amounts.

### **Amphetamines**

We receive so many mixed message about this class. I will never understand why a Schedule II narcotic is prescribed to children, when we have little knowledge about its impact on an evolving nervous system. For adults, the biggest concern is addiction, and high blood pressure, causing strokes and cardiac arrest. If you must take them, please stay at the lowest dosage possible, and take frequent vacations. Again, they can kill you mixed with alcohol - please don't chance it. Sudden withdrawal can have serious consequences.

### **Antipsychotics**

I can in no way countenance modern anti-psychotics. They do not work well or for long; and they have the greatest propensity for long-term brain damage, obesity, diabetes and pancreatitis.

**NOTE:** *Most recently, the Department of Justice slammed Ely Lilly (who brought us both Prozac and Cymbalta) with the largest criminal fine in history for marketing Zyprexa (olanzepine) in illegal ways. AstraZeneca paid a huge fine for illegally marketing Seroquel. I would not count on your doctor to know.*