

Depakote and Bipolar Disorder

Every single day, you can see a lot of people going to and from drugstores. Different medicines are used to address different kinds of illnesses and diseases. There are over-the-counter medicines that you can buy without any prescriptions. But some regulated drugs need the proper prescription before you can purchase them.

Not all illnesses can be given just about any medicine. Different conditions require different types of treatment and medications. Just to be sure that you're on the safe side, consult a doctor before taking any medication. You must be aware now that there are individuals that abuse certain drugs, and this can lead to undesirable situations. And if you're suffering from bipolar disorder, what you really need is the help of a medical professional who knows a great deal about the illness.

There are several medications available for bipolar disorder. The most common are mood stabilizers. Valproic acid is usually given to bipolar patients, and there are a few brand names that sell this medication including Depakene and Depakote.

Depakote is a brand name of valproic acid. It is considered an anticonvulsant that doctors usually prescribe as mood stabilizers for bipolar patients. Valproic acid is a very effective medication for bipolar, however, it has certain side effects like divalproex sodium.

The side effects can be divided into the common ones and the less common. In any case, you should always verify with the doctor especially if the side effects are bothersome and continues on.

Common Side Effects

- Mild stomach or abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- Change in your menstrual cycle
- Indigestion
- Loss of hair and appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting

- Unusual weight gain or loss
- Trembling of arms and hands

Less Common

- Unsteadiness or clumsiness
- Constipation
- Drowsiness and dizziness
- Changes in mood, behavior, and mental
- Headache
- Skin rash
- Restlessness
- Unusual excitement
- Irritability
- Uncontrolled eye movements
- Increased seizures
- Weakness and tiredness
- Eye spots or yellow eyes (and skin)
- Bruising and unusual bleeding
- Swelling of the face

The list only includes the most commonly experienced side effects of bipolar patients. If you feel other side effects not included in the list, then you must inform your doctor immediately.

Pharmacology

Depakote or valproic acid increases the brain concentration of GABA or gamma aminobutyric acid thereby acting as an anticonvulsant. But its action mechanism is not yet established and the effect is also unknown with regards to the neuronal membrane.

Depakote is administered orally and is rapidly absorbed. A single dose can give peak levels of serum after four hours, and its half-life ranges from 6-16 hours. Patients taking antiepileptic drugs together with Depakote will have a lower serum half-life.

If Depakote is administered amid meals, a minor delay can occur in the absorption of the valproic acid, and is quickly distributed in the body since it is bound strongly to plasma proteins. Protein binding may be decreased by increasing the dose. If Depakote needs to be used as a therapeutic drug, the concentration must only be about 50-100 mcg per ml. At present, good correlation between serum levels, therapeutic effect, and daily dose, is yet to be

established.

The therapy must be instituted at periodic intervals at first because there have been reports about platelet aggregation and thrombocytopenia inhibition. The bleeding time and platelet counts should also be determined.

When your doctor prescribes Depakote, you must follow all instructions pertaining to dosage and administration carefully. This is essential to avoid over dosage. Some patients ended in coma with the improper use of valproic acid. Since valproic acid is rapidly absorbed, there may be limited value of gastric lavage. Supportive measure must be applied to prevent hypovolemia and make sure that your urinary output is maintained.

Bipolar disorder requires medication as part of the treatment. Valproic acid is one of the many medications approved for bipolar disorder. With the right dosage, this can reduce bipolar symptoms, prevent episodes from occurring, shorten hospitalizations, and help the individual in living a productive life despite his condition.

Over time, bipolar disorder exposes people to mood changes which can reach the point of unacceptability in the society. But with proper treatment and medication, bipolar patients can lead rewarding lives.