

# MEDICAL INTERVENTION OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

*Medical Intervention for children with Autism is a must read by parents, teachers and caregivers. It is set out to reviewing the parameters of drug therapy, identifying the general challenges of medication, perusing the Autism medicines cabinet and verifying the various vaccines available for use. Before jumping into a drug therapy for your child, you need to understand your motivations and what medications can and cannot do for your child. One should know the goals of taking the medication and weigh the potential gains as against the possible risks.*

## **Introduction**

It is a known fact that to date there is no known medication that can cure Autism in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. However, medication can be incredibly useful in reducing conditions that often go along with having Autism, such conditions include debilitating anxiety, depression, seizures, aggressive behaviours, some sensory issues, insomnia and digestive problems. Majority of these problems are often experienced by the children with Autism in an inclusive setting. But with careful administration of medication from qualified doctors many people suffering from these conditions autistic or otherwise can derive much more pleasure and enjoyment out of life.

It is very clear that taking medication, like almost everything people do, has its benefits and risks, but one has to balance the benefits of medications with its attendant risks. It is important to note that as parents, caregivers or teachers, should be aware of both the benefits and risks of medications so as to be informed better during decision making, when considering drug therapy for a child in an inclusive setting. The Question is, Can medication really help? How long does one wait before he/she can see if the medication achieves the desired goals or effects? One has to make sure that sufficient research is carried out using the available resources, example the internet, books, people who have taken the drugs in the past, and, of course medical practioners or doctors who are the practioners in health service delivery. Autism medication can be dangerous, if not appropriately administered for example, overdose of any of the drugs can lead to the flowing: Dry mouth, Blurred vision, Constipation, Drowsiness, Excess anxiety, Difficulty with urination, Cognition and memory difficulties, Decrease in sexual libido. Twitching of muscles and increased heart rate and heart rhythm irregularities.

However, there are antiepileptic also known as anticonvulsants. Many people with autism also have epilepsy, a disorder of the brain that results in recurrent

unprovoked seizures. The term antiepileptic refers to a class of drugs generally used to prevent epileptic seizures. What makes these drugs popular is that not only are they helpful to people on the Autism Spectrum with epilepsy, but they also have the ability to stabilize brain activity, which can assist in the control of aggressive outbursts, explosive behaviour, self injurious behaviour and other challenging behaviour.

### **Wise Use of Medication**

The wise use of medication in an inclusive setting depends fully on the need for a medical doctor who can plainly explain the possibilities for both benefits and side effects of a medication is worth his or her weight in gold. It is the responsibility of parents to find out who is a good doctor what will attend to their desired goal of having a good medication. A good doctor will be in position to tell you what medication can and cannot do for your child with Autism. It is a fact, that medications can address some of the symptoms that often occur in autism (like anxiety or depression). Reduce some of the physical and mental causes of certain behaviours often associated with Autism (like seizures, poor digestion and some sensitivities).

However, it is equally important to note that Company Websites, as well as other trusted web and written materials can assist in this regard.

The Pill Book (Bantam), by Harold Silverman (2004) is an easy to read, accurate and reliable introduction to many medication. Look up what people have to say about a drug by using a search engine. Just remember that you are often reading opinions from personal experiences, which can affect the reliability and validity of what is present.

Providing medication to children with Autism can be a serious issue because an autistic child may need medication to function better in the society, but the body of an autistic person does its best to reject medication. Medical test have shown that autistic people are more prone to drug reactions and rare side effects that doctors don't often seen to worry about. The people in the autism spectrum are more likely to have paradoxical reactions, which occur when a drug should function one way but does the opposite. And generally speaking, the autistic population is more likely to experience drug toxicity, or toxic effects from a drug regardless of the amount taken. An autistic person's body does not always get rid of medications as fast as the average person does. As a result, a person on the spectrum may need to start a medication at a much lower dose than normal and likely remain on that low dose. There should be careful monitoring of persons with autism by the doctors and caretakers to avoid adverse conditions of drug intake by the children with Autism in an inclusive setting.

It is very important to note that medication cannot achieve the following for the children with Autism:

- Cure Autism.
- Make the affected person with loss of speech to start talking.
- Make the affected person more intelligent.

- Make the person learn new skills.
- Cannot improve the status of the individual.
- It will only serve as a remediation (Autism Research Institute ARI (1964 [www.autismwebsite.com/ari/index.htm](http://www.autismwebsite.com/ari/index.htm))).

### **How to Handle Drug Therapy for Children with Autism in an Inclusive Setting**

The knowledge of new medications and new information about existing drugs are very important for possible intervention. One has to be current, focus and interested in the therapy he or she wants to administer. He or she should adhere to the following advice:

- Discuss the pros and cons of some of the more common medications for the children with Autism in an inclusive setting.
- Never be afraid to discuss any questions or concerns you have with your doctor.
- You should seek permission of the doctor to tape your discussions with him on medication for your Autistic child.
- Bring another close relation or friend with you during the appointment with the doctor on medication of your child.
- Read up thoroughly on the medication including off-label uses and its side effects before administering the drug.

Thomson PDR (2004). You can also read up on the literature from Pharmaceutical books for more information.

The important thing to note in the administration of drugs to the children with Autism in an inclusive setting are as follows: Note that the administration of medication changes the Chemical function of the body, however, making it a very serious matter, so you need to follow a few simple rules, before you alter the medication of autistic child.

In other words, don't begin or end a programme of medication on your own:

- Follow instructions exactly.
- Beware of mixing medications with certain substances, example, people shouldn't drink alcohol and grape fruit juice with certain medications.
- Discuss the food and drink effects of the medication you are administering with your child's doctor.
- Inform the doctor of any other drugs you are administering ranging from simple over-the-counter drugs to the most tightly controlled substances.
- Note that dangerous interaction effects may exist between the medications.
- Avoid Herbal complementary, or other non-prescription supplements.
- Inform your doctor about any therapies you may be pursuing because they may interact with the medications.
- Identify any possible side effects related to the common side effects such as:
  - i) Lethargy
  - ii) Insomnia
  - iii) Constipation.

- iv) Changes in appetite or weight.
- v) Dry mouth.
- vi) Nausea.

However, if you are an autistic adult considering drug therapy, ask your doctor about any possible effects the medication may have on sperm counts, and sexual function if you are a woman and effects on fertility and pregnancy. Also, find out if a family member has tried a drug you are considering. Given the genetic influence on drug tolerance, you may want to consider shying away from drugs that have caused blood relations to suffer from bad side effects. There is need to pay special attention to any black box warnings. The black box warn parents about the increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviour in children and adolescents being treated with these medications. Think of these warnings as a call for extra vigilance when administering such medications.

### **Identifying Helpful Medications**

It is very necessary to note that medication does not cure Autism, but it can help lessen some of the more debilitating effects. The medical field uses four major groupings of medication to help with the co-occurring characteristic of autism. Take a closer look on each category of drugs. Start with information on beginning the medication search process with the right doctor, because the wrong doctor can send your child into a medical tailspin. We should also discuss medications that deals with range and other challenging behaviours in more severely affected people with autism. Make sure you consult the doctor about all the available options if you aren't keen on any approach to follow.

Start the process of medication with qualified doctor. A doctor who understands the implications Autism Spectrum disorders have in metabolizing medication based experience. He also understands the concept of needing to start low and go slow with initial and continuing dose of medication. The doctor helps you to understand the risks and benefits of medications to help you maintain perspectives on the possibility of side effects. In all medications you need to work closely with your prescribing physician when receiving autism medications for your child especially if you observe no change in unwanted behaviours or symptoms or you observe an unwanted change. Certainly, you should keep your doctor aware of when things are going well.

It is important to note that: the length of time your child takes a particular medication depends on the following factors:

- Has the effectiveness of the medication changed over the time of use?
- Does a new medication your doctor introduces have a bad interaction with medication your child is currently taking?
- Can you generic drug available at a low cost?

- Beware, however, that even the slightest variation in chemical make-up between similar drugs from different manufactures can have a large effect on the medically sensitive of person with autism.
- Note that, the longer a drug has been in the market, the more doctors and users know about its usages and side effects.

## Antipsychotic Drugs

A typical antipsychotic drugs are used to treat psychiatric conditions and are approved for treating schizophrenia. Doctors are using them more and more in place of what are known as typical or first generation antipsychotic drugs. In lower doses, these drugs serve to control anxiety, anger and rage (Antiepileptics, anticonvulsants drug).

The common typical antipsychotic drugs include:

- Aripiprazole → ability – Can cause nausea, headache, insomnia
- Clozapine → Clozaril – It can reduce previous medication.
- Quetiapine → Seroguel – Shows no evidence of minimal weight gain but the drug is linked to some sedation.
- Risperidon → Risperidal – Users have experience weight gain and face a slightly higher risk of tiredness.
- Ziprasidone → Geodon – Users experienced minimal weight gain but present no evidence of hypotension.

## Conclusion

The paper started with an abstract which gave insight into the Medical Intervention for Children with Autism in an inclusive setting and reviewed the parameters of drug therapy and verification of vaccines in the market. It equally attempted the goals of taking medications and the risks involved. This followed with the introduction which was loaded on the administration of drugs, and the risk involved, addressed the issues on medication and wise use of it. It further touched the therapies of handing drugs, identifying the helpful medication, and who to deliver medication, the antipsychotics medications and general knowledge of autism medication in an inclusive setting.

## References

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