

Stress from Side Effects Found in Patients on Antipsychotics

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## **Introduction**

- Antipsychotics side effects can be debilitating and stressful.
- Antipsychotics can develop a variety of side effects, and it is common for patients to experience at least one during treatment.
- Researchers mostly focus on the prevalence and appearance of side effects, not how stress levels from side effects differ between patients experiencing side effects and those who do not.
- Research question: do patients receiving antipsychotics experience more stress from side effects than patients not experiencing side effects?

## **Literature Review**

- Antipsychotics are used for the treatment of psychosis disorders. This includes diagnoses such as: schizophrenia, bi-polar disorder, and some non-psychosis disorders. Side effects from antipsychotics include mild sedation, dry mouth, constipation, akathisia, sexual dysfunction, acute dystonia, weight gain, tardive dyskinesia, myocarditis, and agranulocytosis. Side effect type and severity presents itself differently amongst patients. Side effects are a common occurrence amongst antipsychotics.
- Multiple studies report most of their sample experiencing at least one side effect from their antipsychotic. Previous data such as this support the claim that side effects are frequently occurring in patients on at least one antipsychotic.
- Previous research also reports high associations of distress among patients experiencing side effects. One study found there was a, “[significant association with reported] weight gain, difficulty thinking/concentrating, muscle/joint stiffness and depression as quite or extremely distressing (Fakhoury et al., 2001).
- A significant association between side effects and distress resulted in patients having a negative wellbeing and lack of devotion to their antipsychotic treatment (Schimmelmann et al., 2005). Patients were also found to be highly dissatisfied with their antipsychotic (Fakhoury et al., 2001). This issue also led to a high rate of nonadherence towards treatment (Fakhoury et al., 2001).

## **Methodology**

- Study will be generated through Qualtrics and uploaded to SONA.
- 60 or more participants will be recruited from SONA with diverse demographic responses.
- Participants will be asked to complete a consent form, demographics questionnaire, list of currently prescribed antipsychotics, and list of side effects being experienced from said antipsychotic(s). Qualifying participants will be directed to answer questions on a scale of 1 to 5 regarding how often they experience side effects, if their side effects/ medication causes them stress, etc. and be asked to complete a stress scale.
- Higher overall scores will be associated with higher levels of stress, and lower scores will be associated with lower levels of stress.
- At the end of the study participants will be directed to the debriefing sheet.

## **Expected Results**

- Participants experiencing side effects from their antipsychotic will have an overall higher stress score than participants who do not experience side effects.
- Participants experiencing side effects will report thinking their treatment is less successful and/ or be less adherent to treatment.

## **References**

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