Evidence-based Psychopharmacology

Introduction to the Series

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The pioneers of modern psychopharmacology prided themselves on the empirical nature of their work, and the rigor of their clinical data. Evidence-based medicine emphasizes the importance of searching for relevant studies and making decisions in the light of the data (Sackett et al., 1996), and therefore has immediate appeal for our field. Of course, clinical decisions are only as good as the existing evidence, and critics have rightly pointed out the necessity for good clinical judgement and for further research when the data is poor (Klein, 1993; Rush, 2001; Wells, 1999). Nevertheless, there has been a steady growth in methods for systematically reviewing the literature, assessing the clinical trials database, and optimizing clinical decision-making (Chalmers and Altman, 1995; Eddy, 1996; Fawcett et al., 1999).

This series will include articles which address questions such as (1) what is the best first-line psychopharmacological intervention for a particular disorder; (2) how long should such an intervention be continued, and (3) what is the next best strategy should the first-line psychopharmacological agent fail? These questions lie at the heart of clinical psychopharmacology.

The Evidence-based Psychopharmacology Series will be published consecutively in the International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology. The articles are adapted versions of chapters that will be included in a book bearing the same name as the series (edited by D. J. Stein, B. Lerer and S. M. Stahl) to be published by Cambridge University Press. All the articles in this series that are published in the Journal will be fully peer reviewed. Since interpretation of the evidence may differ, responses to and comments on the papers in this series will be considered for publication in the Journal and should be submitted to the Editor-in-Chief. Letters to the Editor are the preferred format.

References