

NEUROPSYCHIATRY AND BEHAVIORAL NEUROLOGY

Reduction and Prevention of Agitation in Patients with Neurocognitive Disorders: An International Psychogeriatric Association Consensus Algorithm

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Abstract

Background: The International Psychogeriatric Association (IPA) extends its commitment to serving those with psychiatric and behavioral manifestation in the presence of cognitive impairment and dementia with this introduction of an agitation reduction and prevention algorithm that builds on the definition of agitation developed by IPA.

Method: This presentation describes a review of literature, treatment guidelines, to recommend an algorithm for care and a reiterative integration of expert opinion within the context of an IPA Agitation Work group, a panel of international experts on agitation. The outcome is an integration of available information into a comprehensive algorithm.

Result: The IPA Agitation Work Group recommends the Investigate, Plan, and Assess (IPA) approach to agitation reduction and prevention. A thorough investigation of the behavior is followed by planning and implementation with an emphasis on shared decision-making; the success of the plan is assessed and adjusted as needed. The process is repeated until agitation is reduced to an acceptable level and prevention of recurrence is optimized. Nonpharmacologic interventions are part of every plan and are continued throughout the process. Pharmacologic interventions are organized into panels of choices for nocturnal agitation, mild-moderate agitation or agitation with prominent mood features, moderate-severe agitation, and severe agitation with threatened harm to the patient or others. Therapeutic alternatives are presented for each panel. The occurrence of agitation in a different venues is considered (home, nursing home, emergency department).

The IPA definition of agitation is operationalized into an agitation management algorithm emphasizing the integration of non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic interventions, reiterative assessment of response to treatment, adjustment of therapeutic approaches to reflect the clinical situation, and shared decision-making. (home, hospice), with adjustments to the therapeutic approach.

Conclusion: The IPA definition of agitation is operationalized into an agitation management algorithm emphasizing the integration of non-pharmacologic and pharmacologic interventions, reiterative assessment of response to treatment, adjustment of therapeutic approaches to reflect the clinical situation, and shared decision-making.