



Clinicians Fact Sheet On Prescription Of Mood Stabilizers For Persons With Mental Retardation And Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD)

1. Comprehensive treatment of mania may require management of acute agitation, psychosis, and chronic mood instability.
 2. Acute, manic agitation is best treated with injectable antipsychotics such as olanzapine, ziprasidone, or haloperidol.
3. Benzodiazepines should be used with great care in managing acute agitation in persons with MR/DD.
4. Psychosis associated with mania is best treated with new antipsychotics such as Zyprexa, Seroquel, Abilify or Risperidone.
5. Antipsychotic medications can be tapered when mood symptoms are stabilized and the psychotic symptoms are improved.
6. Lithium and valproic acid are often effective as chronic mood stabilizers.
7. Valproic acid is effective for mania and doses can be titrated to reduce symptoms but not exceed antiepileptic levels.
8. Lithium has a narrow therapeutic window (0.4 to 1.0 MEq/L) in the patient with MR/DD and this medication is titrated to symptom improvement.
9. The titration speed of the oral dose of lithium and serum levels is based on the level of medical frailty and the severity of intellectual disability.
10. The long-term cessation of mood stabilizers depends on symptom severity, the risk of relapse, and drug toxicity.

Special Issue. Expert Consensus Guidelines Series: Treatment of psychiatric and behavioral problems in mental retardation. American Journal on Mental Retardation 2000;105(3):165-188.