



# Addressing Antipsychotic-induced Weight Gain in Severe Mental Disorders

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## DESCRIPTION

Weight gain is a common and challenging side effect associated with the use of antipsychotic medications in patients with severe mental disorders. Managing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that considers individual factors, medication choices, lifestyle interventions, and on-going monitoring to promote both physical and mental well-being. Antipsychotic-induced weight gain can significantly impact patients' overall health and quality of life. Excessive weight gain not only contributes to physical health risks such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome but also can lead to psychological distress, decreased medication adherence, and reduced treatment efficacy. Recognizing and addressing this side effect is essential for optimizing the long-term outcomes of patients with severe mental disorders. One key aspect of managing antipsychotic-induced weight gain is medication selection and dosage optimization. Different antipsychotic medications vary in their propensity to cause weight gain, with some being more likely to result in significant metabolic effects than others. Psychiatrists and healthcare providers must consider the individual's medical history, metabolic profile, and treatment response when selecting an anti-psychotic medication. Additionally, starting with the lowest effective dose and regularly assessing medication efficacy and tolerability can help minimize the risk of weight gain while maintaining therapeutic benefits. In conjunction with medication management, lifestyle interventions play a crucial role in mitigating antipsychotic-induced weight gain. Encouraging healthy eating habits, regular physical activity, and weight monitoring can help patients maintain a healthy weight and reduce the metabolic impact of antipsychotic medications. Collaborating with dietitians, exercise specialists, and other allied healthcare professionals can provide patients with the support and resources needed to make sustainable lifestyle changes. Behavioral interventions focused on addressing factors such as emotional eating, sedentary behaviour, and medication

adherence can also be beneficial. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and motivational interviewing techniques can help patients develop coping strategies, improve self-regulation skills, and enhance motivation for adopting healthy behaviours. Incorporating Behavioral interventions into the treatment plan can complement pharmacological approaches and support long-term weight management goals. Regular monitoring and assessment of metabolic parameters are essential components of managing antipsychotic-induced weight gain. Healthcare providers should routinely monitor weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), waist circumference, blood pressure, fasting glucose, lipid levels, and other metabolic markers to detect early signs of metabolic disturbances and guide treatment decisions. Monitoring should be conducted at regular intervals, with adjustments made to the treatment plan as needed based on individual patient responses and risk factors. In cases where significant weight gain occurs despite optimization of medication and lifestyle interventions, additional pharmacological strategies may be considered. Adjunctive medications such as metformin, topiramate, orlistat, and certain antiepileptic drugs have shown promise in mitigating antipsychotic-induced weight gain and improving metabolic parameters in some patients. However, the use of these medications should be carefully monitored and individualized based on the patient's medical history, tolerability, and treatment goals. In summary, the management of antipsychotic-induced weight gain in patients with severe mental disorders requires a multifaceted approach that integrates medication management, lifestyle interventions, behavioural strategies, and regular monitoring.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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