

Case Study #10a. Follow-up of PPD treatment with medications

The patient is a 32-year-old woman who is 5 months postpartum. She is no longer breastfeeding. At your most recent appointment 2 weeks ago, she had an Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) score of 17. On examination, you determined that she was moderately depressed, and she agreed to a trial of antidepressant medication, which you prescribed. She has been on a low dose since that appointment, and presents today for follow-up.

Questions

1. What things should you do at this appointment to follow-up on her antidepressant treatment?
 - **Have her complete another EPDS questionnaire. You can use this as a measure of response. You can also use it as a screen for suicidal thoughts.**
 - **Conduct a brief clinical evaluation. Ask once more about her mood and her interest or pleasure in things.**
 - **Ask her about any thoughts of suicide or harm to her infant.**
 - **Ask her about any side effects.**
2. On examination, she reports that she has continued to feel depressed, but is no worse than before. Her EPDS score is still 17, and she does not have any suicidal thoughts. She denies any side effects. What is your next step in treatment?

You should increase the dose of medication to the next highest dose and schedule her for a return visit in another 2 weeks. You might also discuss the possibility of adding counseling to her treatment regimen.

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Case Study #10b. Referral for treatment

The patient is a 32-year-old woman who is 5 months postpartum. She is no longer breastfeeding. At your most recent appointment 2 weeks ago, she had an Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) score of 17. On examination, you determined that she was moderately depressed. She was reluctant to start antidepressant medications, but she agreed to a referral for psychotherapy for her depression. You made a referral to a local counselor whom you trust and with whom you have worked together with other patients before. She has had two counseling sessions since your last appointment, and presents today for follow-up.

Questions

1. What things should you do at this appointment to follow-up on her antidepressant treatment?
 - **Have her complete another EPDS questionnaire. You can use this as a measure of response. You can also use it as a screen for suicidal thoughts.**
 - **Conduct a brief clinical evaluation. Ask once more about her mood and her interest or pleasure in things.**
 - **Ask her about any thoughts of suicide or harm to her infant.**
 - **Ask her about her thoughts about the effectiveness of the counseling.**
2. On examination, she reports that she has continued to feel depressed, but is no worse than before. Her EPDS score is still 17, and she does not have any suicidal thoughts. What is your next step in treatment?

You should encourage her to continue with counseling and schedule her for a return visit in another 2 weeks. You might also discuss the possibility of adding medication to her treatment regimen.

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