**Prescribing Neuropsychopharmacology Medications**

**Discuss your initial thoughts about prescribing agents that directly affect the brain.**

Personal thoughts on prescribing medications that directly affect the brain is scary.  Primary physicians have reservations about prescribing these medications and rely heavily on mental health providers for direction.  Stahl’s Essential Pharmacology (2020) states, “to interpret the behavioral consequences of psychiatric medicines, one must be fluent in the language and principles of chemical neurotransmission” (p.1).  This is going to be a difficult process with on-line education.  Reading is not the way best way for everyone to learn.  The internet does provide access to videos that can explain difficult subjects in ways that the brain can understand better.

**What weight does this carry for a provider?  What considerations come into consideration with each population; pediatric/adolescent, adult, geriatric?**

Mental health nurse practitioners must be aware of risks and benefits of each medicine, family history, personal medical history, diagnosing a patient, assess why they are seeking treatment, understanding cultures and treatments allowed for specific cultures, knowing all medications prescribed and over the counter for each patient (Johnson & Vanderhoef, 2017).  There are many moving parts, and it will require a desire to dig deep to be the most effective and safe provider.

Pediatric and adolescent neurons can be affected by outside factors such as abuse, neglect, stress, diet (Stahl, 2020, p.26).  Becoming a skilled investigator is necessary when treating children and prescribing drugs that affect their brain.  With an adult there is similar investigation that needs to be done.  Medications interaction with polypharmacy geriatrics is a concern.  Having previously worked in cardiology, it was known that some medications could not be taken with statins.  Reading about the CYP 3A4 enzyme and how inhibitors and substrates worked clarified the reasoning behind the pharmacists calls (Stahl, 2020).  It is a lot to consider.

**Do you have any apprehension about prescribing in the PMHNP? What are they and why?**

Having worked in primary care for many years, there is firsthand witnessing of medications being tried, medications failing, physicians at the end of their rope when it came to prescribing a medication that provided relief for the patients.  Really, being overwhelmed with clients and having clients that are noncompliant with taking their medications is an apprehension.  The biggest apprehension is having been a nurse for so many years, my job was to do as the doctor told me.  Being put into the position of prescribing was always beyond my scope of practice (Statutes and Rules, n.d.).  People’s lives are in our hands in a completely different arena when we become prescribers.

Becoming a Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner requires many competencies to be filled per Johnson and Vanderhoef’s 4th Edition of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (pp. 11-13).  Those that are called are the nurses to pursue something so complicated.

**Lastly, what interests you most about neuro-psychopharmacology**?

I feel it is incredible that someone who is feeling sad and depressed can be helped with a medication.  Being brought up in a small town with little access to medical care, there was no one that advocated for mental health care in any form.  If there was a problem, you worked harder to get the mind straight.

This part of healthcare needs to be addressed and there are simply not enough providers.  I believe if we can, we should always find ways to provide better care for one another.  This was a unique opportunity provided by King University and I wanted to become part of this new aspect of patient care.  It has not been a cake walk but I believe we can impact many people by streamlining this field and educating those that are qualified.

**References**

Johnson, K., & Vanderhoef, D. (2017). *Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurse practitioner review and resource manual*. Nursing Knowledge Center, American Nurses Association.

Stahl, S. M. (2020). *Stahl's essential psychopharmacology*. Cambridge University Press.

*Statutes and rules*. Statutes And Rules. (n.d.). https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/health-professional-boards/nursing-board/nursing-board/statutes-and-rules.html.