



HIV treatments and side effects

Presented by Damian Kelly

“And I will use treatments for the benefit of the ill in accordance with my ability and my judgment, but from what is to their harm and injustice I will keep them.”



The purpose of medication

To make you better

To alleviate symptoms

To prevent damage



This does not always happen

- Sometimes medication can have adverse effects
- It may do what it is supposed to do BUT cause events not intended too
- This can result in patients 'blaming' the doctor/nurse



Adverse reactions

MILD

MODERATE

SEVERE



Mild

Headache
Sickness
Diarrhoea
Unable to sleep
Dizziness

Moderate

Headache
Sickness
Diarrhoea
Sleep disturbances
Rash
Increased liver enzymes
High protein levels
Bone loss

Severe

Sickness
Diarrhoea
Rash
Suicide thoughts
Increased liver enzymes
High protein levels
Blood cells
Anaemia
CNS
Fits
Liprodystrophy
Bone loss
Blisters



Side effects

- Common cause of illness, distress and discomfort for people taking anti HIV drugs
- Most common – nausea, diarrhoea
- Some people experience worse side effects than others



Two main reasons for side effects

- Allergic reaction to the medication
- Direct effects of a particular medication



Development of side effects

- Most occur after week or two but no strict pattern
- Vary greatly from person to person
- Side effects occur because of the highly concentrated levels of a drug in the blood in the weeks or months after starting treatment



Side effects

- Over time peak levels of drug go down and side effects should wear off
- Medicines available to control some side effects – anti-nausea or anti-diarrhoea drugs for example



Long term side effects

- Changes in body shape and metabolism – lipodystrophy
- Increase in levels of fat with some HIV medications – possibility of heart disease



Side effects

- Depression – particularly linked to Sustiva
- Nerve damage – peripheral neuropathy
- Bone mineral loss
- Sustained long-term effects?



Supporting patients

- Helping the service user to understand the reasons why medication is needed
- Being aware of side effects – ‘ordinary’ and ‘serious’
- Encouragement to continue taking medication despite side effects



Managing side effects

- Food/diet
- Time of medication
- Drug interactions – including recreational drugs



Managing side effects

- Be aware of over the counter remedies
- Plan your day and or route
- Take time off
- Follow advice given



Side effects

- Explain that as the drugs break down the virus the body may show ‘shock’ signs – toxins floating around
- Importance of adherence – resistance



Side effects

- Keep a diary of any 'events'
- Attend appointments (clinics)
- Ask for help and or support if you need it



Change!

- There are about 30 drugs to choose from – find the combination that suites YOU





Any questions?