

Foundation Seminar in Mental Health

Preliminary program

This seminar will be delivered by a combination of a 6-week self-paced learning package followed by a live one-day seminar

Self-paced learning package: available from Friday 21 March 2025

The self-paced learning package comprises approximately 6.5 hours of learning materials. The self-paced learning package materials must be completed prior to attending the live virtual seminar.

Area	Topics covered	Presenters
<p>Mental Health reflective questionnaire submission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify personal learning needs related to Mental Health conditions and Mental Health pharmacy practice • Reflect upon common stigmas associated with Mental Health • Analyse own confidence levels and attitudes about interacting with Mental Health consumers and carers 	
<p>Schizophrenia and related psychoses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe signs and symptoms of schizophrenia and related psychoses • Define and provide examples of positive, negative and cognitive signs and symptoms of schizophrenia • Identify key features of schizoaffective disorder, substance-induced psychosis and delusional disorder • Define common types of delusions such as grandiose, somatic, capgras and persecutory • Provide an overview of pharmacological management options for schizophrenia and related psychoses in both acute management and maintenance therapy 	<p>Viandro Borja, Lead Pharmacist – Alfred Mental and Addiction Health (AMAH), SHPA Mental Health Leadership Committee</p> <p>Jake Bromley, Senior Pharmacist – Psychotropic Stewardship, The Alfred Hospital, Melbourne, Vic</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly describe the mechanism of action and known receptor activity profiles for different antipsychotic agents • List some key clinical monitoring requirements for different antipsychotics and explain the rationale behind these • Identify and compare key features of different antipsychotic agents, particularly in relation to adverse effect profiles and important counselling points • Discuss medication adherence issues in consumers with psychosis 	
<p>Bipolar disorder</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define key terms relating to bipolar disorder including acute mania, hypomania, depressive episode, mixed features and rapid cycling • Differentiate between Bipolar I disorder and Bipolar II disorder • Name different pharmacological agents used in the treatment of bipolar disorder and broadly explain when each would be most appropriately used; for example in prophylaxis, acute mania • Describe the principles of prophylaxis for bipolar disorder • Summarise precautions, contraindications, potential adverse effects and important counselling points for lithium therapy • Explain therapeutic drug monitoring for lithium in depth • Outline the different types of lithium toxicity, describe potential signs and symptoms 	<p>Alistair Meldrum, Senior Pharmacist, Mental Health, Rockhampton Hospital</p>

	<p>and identify which consumers are most at risk of this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify precautions, contraindications, adverse effects, counselling points and therapeutic drug monitoring principles for sodium valproate in bipolar disorder • Discuss the use of other mood stabilising agents such as lamotrigine and carbamazepine in bipolar disorder 	
<p>Depressive and anxiety disorders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe in detail typical signs and symptoms of major depression. Compare and contrast mild, moderate and severe classifications of major depression • Differentiate between and describe key features of psychotic depression, depression with melancholic features, seasonal affective disorder, substance-induced depression and premenstrual dysphoric disorder • Briefly describe features of grief and adjustment disorder • Identify co-morbid medical conditions which may contribute to depressive signs/symptoms • Discuss a range of non-pharmacological management strategies for depressive disorders • Describe in detail typical signs and symptoms of generalised anxiety disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder and panic disorder • Differentiate between and describe key features of agoraphobia, separation anxiety 	<p>Alice Wisdom, Senior Pharmacist-Community Mental Health, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network</p>

	<p>disorder, social anxiety disorder, common specific phobias, body dysmorphic disorder, hoarding disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a range of non-pharmacological management strategies for anxiety disorders • Compare principles of use of antidepressant medications in depressive and anxiety disorders • Outline key principles for safe and optimal antidepressant medication use in general including important counselling points for consumers and appropriate cessation or switching of agents • Name a range of drugs which may contribute to serotonin toxicity. Describe signs, symptoms and management of serotonin toxicity • Describe mechanism of action, indications, precautions, contraindications, adverse effects, appropriate dose ranges, counselling points, interactions and clinical monitoring for the different classes of antidepressants • Analyse utility, risks, advantages and disadvantages of benzodiazepines in anxiety disorders 	
<p>Clozapine</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the indication and rationale for clozapine use • Describe the pharmacology of clozapine and relate this to its therapeutic effects and side effects • Identify key components of a clozapine pre-treatment workup and necessary baseline blood tests, acknowledging that clinical 	<p>Amy Sieff, Senior Pharmacist - Medication Safety and Antimicrobial Stewardship, Mental Health, South Western Sydney Local Health District</p>

	<p>guidelines in different jurisdictions differ somewhat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss cardiac risks of clozapine, particularly myocarditis and cardiomyopathy, detailing appropriate monitoring and screening for these • Describe required haematological monitoring for clozapine therapy and registration with monitoring databases and explain the rationale for this • Explain how clozapine is typically initiated and discuss the rationale for this, including dose titration and clinical monitoring (again noting some guidelines may differ) • List significant side effects of clozapine and risks associated with these, including but not limited to constipation, hypersalivation and sedation • Discuss physical and metabolic health and risks in relation to clozapine and recommended monitoring and management strategies • Describe the significance and utility of clozapine and norclozapine levels • Explain how clozapine cessation should be managed, whether as part of a treatment plan or an unplanned treatment interruption • Identify and describe clinically significant interactions with clozapine, including caffeine, smoking and prescription medications 	
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<p>Managing Metabolic Side Effects of Psychotropics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the metabolic risks associated with psychotropic medications • Outline recommendations for physical health monitoring for these medications • Develop strategies and interventions to manage associated physical health conditions • Describe lifestyle modifications and resource that can improve physical health • Explain the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in managing metabolic side effects of psychotropics 	<p>Cathy Ngo, Senior Pharmacist, Eastern Health, Melbourne, Vic</p>
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Live virtual seminar: Saturday 3 May 2025

All times are listed in AEST. The below may be subject to change

Time (AEST)	Session
0920-0930	Online login and registration available
0930-0940	<p>Welcome, introductions & housekeeping April Van Der Zwan, Senior Pharmacist - Alfred Mental and Addiction Health, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Vic Jake Bromley, Senior Pharmacist – Psychotropic Stewardship, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Vic</p>
0940-1000	Review of self-paced learning package content with open Q&A

	<p>April Van Der Zwan, Senior Pharmacist - Alfred Mental and Addiction Health, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Vic Jake Bromley, Senior Pharmacist – Psychotropic Stewardship, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Vic</p>
1000-1030	<p>Same, same but different Presented by: Julian Tran, Mental Health Clinical Pharmacist, Alfred Health, Vic</p>
1030-1050	Break
1050-1055	Case session introduction
1055-1155	<p>Case session 1: Unresponsive on the Mental Health unit and headed to ICU – what went wrong? Amy Sieff, Senior Pharmacist - Medication Safety and Antimicrobial Stewardship, Mental Health, South Western Sydney Local Health District</p>
1155-1220	Break
1220-1320	<p>Case session 2: ‘Chronic’ and ‘complex’; how can pharmacists help? George Ma, Team Leader Pharmacist - Mental Health and CAM Unit Pharmacy Department, Metro North Health, Qld</p>
1320-1335	Break
1335-1435	<p>Case session 3: Bipolar disorder April Van Der Zwan, Senior Pharmacist - Alfred Mental and Addiction Health, Alfred Health, Melbourne, Vic</p>
1435-1505	Panel discussion and open Q&A
1505	Seminar close

Please note presentation recordings will not be available from the live day seminar.