Glutethimide Encyclopedia Article

Glutethimide

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Glutethimide

Glutethimide was introduced into clinical medicine in 1954. It was prescribed to treat insomnia and sold as Doriden. It was first acclaimed as a safer "nonbarbiturate" hypnotic—implying that it was free of the problems of abuse, addiction, and withdrawal that were, by then, recognized drawbacks of the older barbiturate SEDATIVE-HYPNOTICS. Withinten years, however, it was recognized that, in most respects, its actions are like those of the BARBITURATES and it shares the same disadvantages.

Figure 1
Glutethimide

Glutethimide is structurally related to the barbiturate drugs and, like the short-acting barbiturates, it depresses or slows the central nervous system. Side effects from its proper use are relatively minor, but a rash is often seen. Like barbiturates, it can produce intoxication and euphoria; TOLERANCE and DEPENDENCE can result with daily use. Glutethimide is metabolized somewhat differently than barbiturates, and OVERDOSE is often far more difficult to treat than barbiturate overdose; fatalities are not uncommon. As a consequence of this and its ABUSE POTENTIAL, glutethimide is included in Schedule III of the CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES ACT. Since the introduction of the BENZODIAZEPINES to treat short-term insomnia, the use of glutethimide has decreased considerably.

See Also

Barbiturates; Complications; Sedatives)

Bibliography

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