

Treating anxiety - from old to new approaches

PRL Morgado

University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

Anxiety disorders are the most common disorder class in Psychiatry. Their critical features include excessive and enduring fear, anxiety, and avoidance of perceived threats in the external and internal environment, including social situations and bodily sensations. New therapeutic approaches to anxiety disorders should consider different drug classes in combination with psychological interventions considering patients' characteristics and preferences.

Benzodiazepines are widely used, safe, and effective treatments for anxiety disorders. Its use should consider specific characteristics apart from the anxiolytic properties, including a prolonged action with a low risk of withdrawal symptoms and addiction. Proper monitoring, individualized treatment plans, and gradual dose reductions can effectively manage the risk of dependence, allowing patients to benefit from their therapeutic effects without experiencing harmful consequences.

In this seminar, we will discuss the role of benzodiazepines in the current treatment of anxiety disorders. We will examine the evidence on the pharmacological and clinical characteristics of mexazolam, a long-acting benzodiazepine that reduces anxiety with lower sedative and psychomotor effects than others such as Alprazolam. An evidence-based and clinically oriented use of benzodiazepines is critical for providing the best care to our patients.