Essential Evidence-Based Psychopharmacology

Second Edition

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Preface

The pioneers of modern psychopharmacology prided themselves on the empirical nature of their work, and the rigor of their clinical data. Evidence-based medicine emphasizes the importance of searching for relevant studies and making decisions in the light of the data, and therefore has immediate appeal for psychopharmacology. This volume attempts to summarize recent advances in evidence-based medication treatment of psychiatric disorders.

Clinical decisions are only as good as the existing evidence, and critics have rightly pointed out the necessity for good clinical judgment and for further research when the data is poor. Nevertheless, there has been a steady growth in methods for systematically reviewing the literature, assessing the clinical trials database, and optimizing clinical decision-making, as well as an ongoing expansion of the evidence-base. We therefore felt that it was timely to update our previous collection of evidence-based chapters on psychopharmacology.

This volume comprises chapters on each of the major psychiatric disorders, and addresses questions such as (1) what is the best first-line psychopharmacological intervention for a particular disorder; (2) how long should such an intervention be continued, and (3) what is the next best strategy should the first-line psychopharmacological agent fail? These questions lie at the heart of clinical psychopharmacology, and we are hopeful that the volume will therefore appeal to practicing clinicians, whether they work in a primary or specialty setting.

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