

Table 15.2 Maintenance Medications Used to Assist With Alcohol Abstinence After Treatment of Acute Alcohol Withdrawal

| Medication | Indications | Dosing | Side effects affecting rehab | Other side effects or considerations |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|--|---|
| Disulfiram (Antabuse) | Acetaldehyde dehydrogenase inhibitor used as maintenance therapy to promote alcohol abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence. | 250-500 mg/day | Cog: + S: + A: + Motor: ++ D: + Com: + F: ++ | Optic neuritis, peripheral neuropathy, hepatitis (rare), skin eruptions, mild drowsiness, fatigue, garlic taste, occasional psychotic reactions with high doses. FDA approved (indication). |
| Naltrexone (Depade, ReVia) | Opioid antagonist used as maintenance therapy to promote alcohol abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence. | 50-100 mg/day | Cog: ++ S: ++ A: ++ Motor: +++ D: + Com: +++ F: ++ | Nausea, dizziness, fatigue, vomiting, increased risk of depression and suicide, somnolence, hepatotoxicity with high doses. Withdrawal symptoms: Tearfulness, nausea, restlessness, abdominal cramps, bone or joint pain, myalgia, nasal symptoms. FDA approved (indication). |
| Acamprosate (Campral) | Maintenance therapy used to promote alcohol abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence. N-methyl-D-aspartate modulator; may interact with glutamate and GABA to restore balance in patients with alcohol dependence. | 1998 mg/day | Cog: + S: + A: 0 Motor: 0 D: + Com: + F: + | Diarrhea, dyspepsia, dizziness, dry mouth, itching, weakness, neuropathy in hands, feet, or legs. FDA approved (indication). |
| Buspirone (Buspar) | Serotonin 1A partial agonist and dopamine 2 antagonist used to promote alcohol abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence and generalized anxiety disorder. | 60 mg/day | Cog: + S: + A: 0 Motor: 0 D: + Com: + F: + | Weight gain: 0 Seizure: 0 Cardiac: 0 Sexual: 0 Half-life is 2-3 h. Not FDA approved (indication). |
| Fluoxetine (Prozac) | Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence with later onset or in patients with severe dependence and family history of alcoholism. | 60 mg/day | Cog: 0/+ S: 0/+ A: + Motor: 0 D: 0/+ Com: 0/+ F: 0 | Weight gain: 0/+ Seizure: ++ Cardiac: 0/+ Sexual: +++ Not FDA approved (indication). |
| Sertraline (Zoloft) | Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence with later onset or in patients with | 200 mg/day | Cog: 0/+ S: 0/+ A: + Motor: 0 D: +++ Com: 0/+ F: 0 | Weight gain: 0 Seizure: 0 Cardiac: 0 Sexual: +++ Not FDA approved (indication). |

From L. Carl, J. Gallo, and P. Johnson, 2014, *Practical Pharmacology in Rehabilitation: Effect of Medication on Therapy* (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics).

| Medication | Indications | Dosing | Side effects affecting rehab | Other side effects or considerations |
|------------------------|--|-------------------|--|--|
| | severe dependence and family history of alcoholism. | | Com: + F: 0 | |
| Ondansetron (Zofran) | Serotonin antagonist used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence with early onset history. | 4 µg/kg twice/day | Cog: + S: + A: 0 Motor: ++ D: + Com: + F: ++ | Headache, malaise, fatigue, constipation, dizziness, rash. Can increase QT prolongation and arrhythmias when combined with antiarrhythmics, tricyclic antidepressants, antipsychotics, anesthetics, or diuretics. Not FDA approved (indication). |
| Topiramate (Topamax) | GABA inhibitor and glutamate antagonist used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence and history of heavy drinking. | 300 mg/day | Cog: ++ S: ++ A: ++ Motor: +++ D: + Com: +++ F: ++ | Monitor for changes in renal function and for rash. May cause language impairment, behavioral changes, weight loss, altered taste, metabolic acidosis, kidney stones, hypohidrosis. Not FDA approved (indication). |
| Aripiprazole (Abilify) | Partial D2 agonist, serotonin 1A partial agonist, and serotonin 2A antagonist used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence. | 30 mg/day | Cog: + S: + A: 0 Motor: + D: + Com: + F: + | Weight gain: + Seizure: 0 Cardiac: + Sexual: + Not FDA approved (indication). |
| Quetiapine (Seroquel) | Serotonin 1A and 2, dopamine 1 and 2, histamine 1, and adrenergic A1 and A2 receptor antagonist used to promote abstinence in patients with alcohol dependence and sleep disorder. | 400 mg/day | Cog: ++ S: ++ A: 0 Motor: ++ D: + Com: ++ F: +++ | Weight gain: ++ Seizure: 0 Cardiac: ++ Sexual: + High risk for orthostasis and falls. Not FDA approved (indication). |

Cog = cognition; S = sedation; A = agitation or mania; Motor = discoordination; D = dysphagia; Com = communication; F = falls; FDA = U.S. Food and Drug Administration; GABA = gamma amino butyric acid.

The likelihood rating scale for encountering the side effects is as follows: 0 = Almost no probability of encountering side effects. 0/+ = Slight probability of encountering side effects with higher doses. + = Little likelihood of encountering side effects. +/++ = Low probability of encountering side effects; however, probability increases with increased dosage. ++ = Medium likelihood of encountering side effects. +++ = High likelihood of encountering side effects, particularly with high doses. ++++ = Highest likelihood of encountering side effects; best to avoid in at-risk patients.