



## Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2005

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### I4 Psychopharmacology of Aggression: An Update

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Attendees of this presentation will be provided with the most current information for the psychopharmacologic treatment of aggression.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by demonstrating astute clinicians can significantly reduce aggression in society and correctional settings with appropriate and judicious use of selected medications and new treatments.

**Introduction:** Both for the general psychiatric clinician and for the forensic psychiatrist treating in correctional settings, recent research findings in the psychopharmacology of aggression is important.

**History of Treatment of Aggression:** Dangerous behavior has long been a focus of society and psychiatry. The asylums of the past were created to protect the chronically ill mentally from abuse by the public, but also to protect the public from the dangerous sequelae of severe mental illness. With the advent of modern psychopharmacology, it has been possible to discharge many chronically ill patients with a history of violence from the large long-term hospitals. The early neuroleptics had unfortunate side effects in maintenance treatment, such as tardive dyskinesia.

**Newer Treatments:** Newer treatments have a better safety profile and have greater specificity in targeting symptoms. Recent research shows variable success in alleviating aggression with different medications. Mood stabilizers are used extensively both as a primary treatment and as adjunctive treatment. Other treatments including benzodiazepines, SSRIs, atypical antipsychotics, and beta-blockers have been used with some variable success on certain populations. Although psychotherapeutic programs and other non-pharmacologic approaches *have been used to reduce* aggression, this paper will focus primarily on psychopharmacologic *approaches to the treatment of aggression*.

**Conclusion:** Astute clinicians can significantly reduce aggression in society and correctional settings with appropriate and judicious use of selected medications and new treatments.

#### Psychopharmacology, Aggression, Treatment