TRICYCLIC ANTIDEPRESSANTS (TCA’s)
TREATMENT APPROACH

DURATION OF MONITORING:

Any patient, referred to hospital, should have decontamination as below and EKG monitoring for 6 hours. If, at that time, the patient remains completely asymptomatic with normal vitals for their age group and a normal repeat EKG, they may be discharged home or to psychiatry as indicated. Any patient, who has had symptoms compatible with a TCA overdose, should be monitored for at least 24 hours following resolution of symptoms.

DECONTAMINATION:

TCA’s have been known to cause bezoars. TCA’s may cause delayed gastric emptying and decreased bowel motility. Hence SDAC is indicated for the patient with a protected airway.

SUPPORTIVE CARE:

The Airway should be secured and ventilation initiated for those patients with a depressed level of consciousness. Respiratory acidosis may worsen hypotension, dysrhythmias and seizures. Continuous cardiac monitoring and 12 lead EKG are indicated.

FLUMAZENIL SHOULD NOT BE USED IF A TRICYCLIC ANTI-DEPRESSANT INGESTION IS POSSIBLE.

FOR HYPOTENSION, give, as necessary:
- a normal saline fluid bolus 10-20 mL/kg
- then, titrate norepinephrine from 0.1-1.0 µg/kg/min**
- then, add other pressors or inotropes as necessary (may follow bedside ECHO, U/S)
- consider a Lipid Emulsion 20% bolus and infusion as per the recommendation of the Toxicologist-on-call. This may precede or substitute for vasopressors and inotropes. See Lipid Resuscitation Therapy Poison Centre resource page.

FOR SEIZURES, give benzodiazepines and propofol if necessary, and blood pressure support.

FOR WIDE COMPLEX QRS > 0.10 msec (in any lead) & VENTRICULAR DYSRHYTHMIAS, give, as necessary:
- See Sodium Bicarbonate (NaHCO₃) Therapy for Sodium Channel Blocking Agent Toxicity with Wide QRS Poison Centre resource page
- IF dysrhythmia, then, lidocaine, 1 mg/kg bolus
- Consider Lipid Emulsion 20% bolus and infusion as per the recommendation of the Toxicologist-on-call. This may precede or substitute for lidocaine. See Lipid Resuscitation Therapy Poison Centre resource page.

† There is no evidence that a bicarbonate infusion prevents against QRS widening or dysrhythmias and is NOT indicated in early TCA presentations. There is no specific evidence that a bicarbonate infusion, after boluses, when the QRS has widened, improves outcome, but may have some theoretical benefit preventing acidosis.

(**If norepinephrine is not available OR the nurse and/or physician is not familiar with the drug, may use high dose dopamine titrated from 10-20 µg/kg/min OR epinephrine titrated from 0.2-1.0 µg/kg/min for α-adrenergic effects.)

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Unusual other measures may be necessary for the patient who does not respond to any of the above therapies and include Magnesium for dysrhythmias, overdrive pacing, ECMO, or intra-aortic balloon pump (IABP) as per the recommendation of the Toxicologist-on-call.

REFERENCES: