Generalized Anxiety Disorder Treatment-Resistant Algorithm

Has the patient tried 3 SSRIs or SNRIs as outlined in GAD Treatment Algorithm?

No → **Go to GAD Treatment Algorithm**

Yes →

Add Pregabalin to Primary SSRI/SNRI

Psychotherapy is strongly advised with treatment-resistant GAD

- See Treatment of GAD with Psychotherapy

Not tolerated →

Steps for adjunctive medications:

1. Replace pregabalin for buspirone.
2. Replace buspirone for quetiapine ER, diazepam or lorazepam. Refer patient to specialist.

Note: understand how to talk to your patient about deprescribing benzodiazepines.

Titrate to target dose

Titrate dose up every week (≥ 2 weeks in older adults)
Follow up in 4 weeks

Is there a clinically meaningful improvement in symptoms and function?

No → Steps for adjunctive medications

Yes →

Continue adjunctive medication for at least 6-12 months, and do not discontinue more than one medication at a time, and only after almost all symptoms are gone.

Note: Treatment discontinuation following more than 6 months of continuous use should be gradual while monitoring for withdrawal syndromes and return of GAD symptoms. Tapering Benzodiazepines should be slow and individualized.

Starting dose (target dose):

- Pregabalin 50 mg TID (150-600 mg/d)
- Buspirone 5 mg BID-TID (20-60 mg/d)
- Quetiapine ER 50 mg Qday (50-200 mg/d)
- Diazepam 2-4 mg/d (consult specialist)
- Lorazepam 0.5-1 mg/d (consult specialist)

Do not increase dose more than:

- Pregabalin 150 mg/d weekly
- Buspirone 5 mg/d every 3 days
- Quetiapine ER 50 mg/d weekly
- Benzodiazepines: consult specialist

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