



From the editor

Out of the pipeline and into your office

Where do you learn about new psychotropics? One source is the drug reps who come to see us all the time, but their educational materials have a marketing objective.

CURRENT PSYCHIATRY's "Out of the Pipeline" offers an alternative—a source of early, unbiased information about new medications for psychiatric practice.

This month's "Out of the Pipeline" (page 65) examines sodium oxybate (Xyrem), indicated for treating cataplexy in patients with narcolepsy. Sodium oxybate is a legally manufactured form of an illegal "date rape" drug. As an orphan drug, sodium oxybate has undergone less clinical testing than is required for conventional FDA approvals. I want to know as much as possible about this medication before I prescribe it, and the article by Lois E. Krahn, MD—one of CURRENT PSYCHIATRY's associate editors—is a good start.

Frankly, it is difficult to find qualified "Out of the Pipeline" authors who don't have apparent conflicts of interest. Almost anyone who could write knowledgeably about premarket experience with a drug has participated in its clinical trials, most of which are supported by pharmaceutical companies. To address this concern, we:

- identify and invite the authors ourselves (without input from pharmaceutical companies)
- emphasize to authors the need for balance and objectivity
- disclose authors' financial relationships with any companies whose products are mentioned or with manufacturers of competing products
- subject each article to peer review and revision before publication.

I expect more drugs will be developed with novel mechanisms of action and very specific indications. This trend will benefit our patients but increase our need for trusted advice, as in CURRENT PSYCHIATRY.

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