



2026 INTERVIEW SUMMARY SHEET

SPEAKER

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TITLE & ORGANIZATION

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TOPIC

Understanding Migraine Drug Side Effects

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Individuals with migraine may have a more sensitive nervous system, making them more prone to side effects from medications targeting the central nervous system.
- Starting with low doses and increasing slowly can mitigate many side effects and help identify the ideal dose that balances efficacy and tolerability.
- Newer CGRP-targeted therapies are generally better tolerated than older oral medications, although patients must monitor for constipation and blood pressure changes.
- Botox offers a high safety profile because it acts peripherally and does not pass through the liver or kidneys.
- Treatment should be a collaborative process that weighs side effects against the patient's comorbidities, lifestyle, and goals.

KEY TREATMENTS

- Anticonvulsants
- Angiotensin II receptor blockers (ARBs)
- Beta-blockers
- CGRP monoclonal antibodies (mAbs)
- Gepants
- OnabotulinumtoxinA (Botox)
- SNRIs/SSRIs
- Tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs)
- Triptans

NOTABLE QUOTES

"If you compare the older drugs to these newer drugs, the newer drugs certainly outperform the older drugs in terms of safety and tolerability."

"If you have a side effect, let us know, because we can either work around that side effect or we can reduce the side effect. There are strategies. It's not all or none ... The most important thing is just having that conversation."

PRACTICAL STEPS

- Patients should use the FAERS database to report new or unlisted side effects to help update drug labels and improve safety monitoring.
- If you are starting a CGRP inhibitor, track blood pressure readings during the first week and share them with your physician.
- Before starting antidepressants, discuss family history of bipolar disorder; if you are starting beta-blockers, discuss any history of asthma.
- If you are taking topiramate, increase water intake to reduce the risk of developing kidney stones.
- Ensure all your providers — neurologist, primary care doctor, and specialists — are communicating to manage overall health alongside migraine treatment.