

Off Label & Unregulated

Off-label medication

Antidepressants

Mirtazapine 3.75-15mg
Trazodone 25-100mg
Amitriptyline 10-50mg
Trimipramine 25-50mg

Antipsychotics

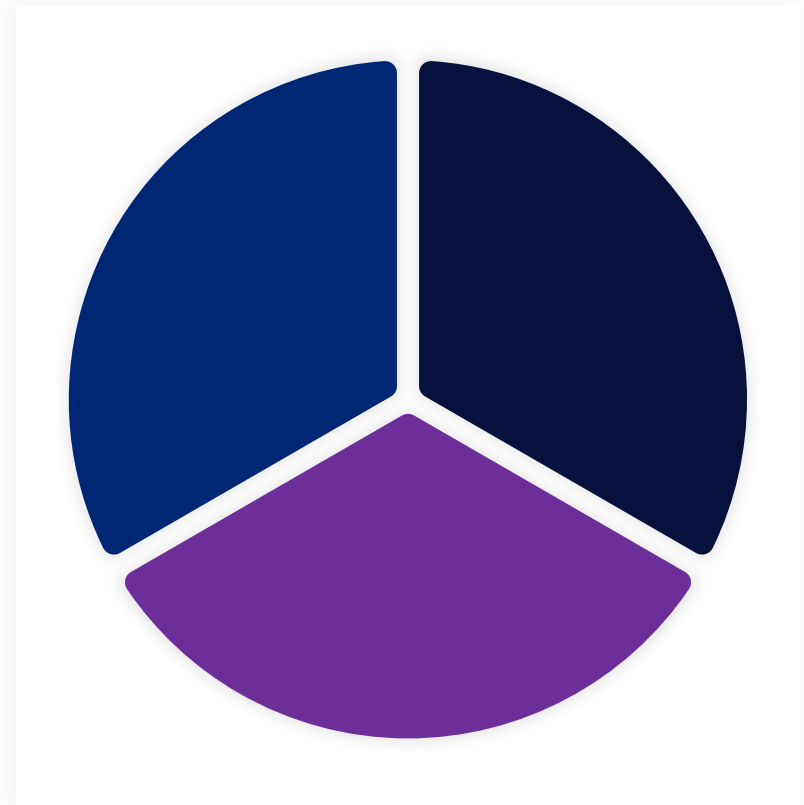
Quetiapine 25-100mg

Others

Gabapentin 100-300mg
Tiagabine 4-8mg
Pramipexole 0.125mg

In older adults, these options should be utilized **only when benefits outweigh risks** (most importantly cognitive & mobility impairment, anticholinergic and orthostatic hypotension)

To be used at the lowest possible dose, as adjunct to non-pharm methods, and stopped as soon as possible.



Over the Counter (OTC)

- Diphenhydramine (antihistamine)*
- Melatonin (dietary supplement)

Caution with antihistamines

Anticholinergic side effects

Impaired mobility

Impaired cognition

Older adults might require **higher** than usual doses of melatonin (due to limited intrinsic stores) – up to **20mg** nightly.

Herbal & other unregulated products

- Tryptophan
- Kava
- Valerian
- Chamomile
- Wuling (Xylaria nigripes)
- St. John's wort
- Passionflower
- California poppy
- Lavender



? What about .. ?

Alcohol



Similar to benzodiazepines, it helps with sleep **onset** and **maintenance**.

Same adverse effects as benzodiazepines

- Even more disruptive to sleep architecture.
- Requires ~2 years of sobriety to restore damaged sleep cycle.

Benefit wears off quickly

- Initially it helps esp. with sleep onset.
- Later becomes a perpetuating factor

Decreases REM & N3 sleep (already compromised)

- More superficial sleep → awakening
- Less emotional & cognitive homeostasis

CBD

To the date of preparing this presentation ..

Cannabidiol (CBD) & Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) → recognized as potential therapies, but available research showed mixed outcomes.

Similarly, only anecdotal reports are published on **medical cannabis** for insomnia, with *potential hazards* of use in older adults.

Weighted/heated blankets

A thorough systematic review in 2020 showed:

Some evidence of efficacy in anxiety

Not enough evidence of benefit for insomnia

