Neuroactive Steroids (Epalons) in the Treatment of Psychiatric and Neurological Disorders

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Epalons represent a novel class of compounds that serve as positive allosteric modulators of the GABA via a neurosteroid site on the GABA<sub>₃</sub> receptor/Cl⁻ ion channel complex. Compounds within this class have been evaluated for many of the indications currently served by the benzodiazepines, as well as by other non-benzodiazepine compounds, such as anxiety, anticonvulsant activity, sleep disorders and migraine. Epalons appear to show distinct advantages over other compounds acting at this complex in that they can produce less ethanol potentiation, a lack of tolerance and appear to be devoid of abuse potential. This presentation will summarize existing literature on this class of compounds and will focus on studies directed towards the analysis and characterization of epalons for the treatment of anxiety disorders.