

SEDATIVE-HYPNOTICS: An Introduction

sedation --- calming effects, relaxation

hypnotic effects --- sleepiness, drowsy

large category of drugs

1. ethyl alcohol = ethanol

2. tranquilizers

“minor” tranquilizers – barbiturates, benzodiazepines

“major” tranquilizers – neuroleptics = antipsychotics = phenothiazines

effects on NS

usually involve **GABA** (gamma-hydroxy-butyric-acid)

the most widespread **inhibitory** NT in the NS

(whose precursor molecule, curiously, is the most widespread *excitatory* NT in the NS, namely glutamate)

GABA RS has 5 “subunits” to it, onto which attach various drugs

GABA RS, when it opens, lets *in* increasing #s of chloride ions (Cl⁻) --- increases the **hyper**polarization of the neuron --- postsynaptic cell is less likely to fire