Hypnosedative Prescribing in Outpatient Psychiatry

Dr Mark Huthwaite¹, Prof Sarah Romans¹ & Victoria Anderson ²

1. Department of Psychological Medicine
   University of Otago
   Wellington School of Medicine

2. Karolinska Institute
   Stockholm, Sweden
Introduction

• Insomnia is a common problem particularly in people with psychiatric disorders

• Its psychopharmacological management is complex

• Many patient, illness and prescriber factors can influence whether and which hypnosedative agent is prescribed

• These factors are poorly understood and are likely to interact in complex ways
Method

• Information on hypnosedative prescriptions was extracted from the clinical records of all current outpatients at two mental health centres
• The duration of use and documentation of prescription review were ascertained
• Gender, Age, ICD10 diagnoses were recorded
• A priori determination of what = “hypnosedative”
• The data were analysed using the Epi info statistical program, versions 6 and 7 and IMB SPSS 20.

• Statistical analysis:
  – counts, percentages and bivariate tests using chi square and Student’s t-tests as appropriate for the data type were run, taking the usual p<0.05 to indicate significance.
  – A single multivariate model, using logistic regression, allowed assessment of confounding between independent variables with hypnosedative use (yes/no) as the dependent variable
Results

$n=318$ case records

- 56.3% male
- Mean age = 41.7 years
- 35.2% were prescribed at least one hypnosedative
- In two thirds (69%) duration > 3 months
- More women (45.3%) > men (27.4%)
Results

n=318 case records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quetiapine</th>
<th>Zopiclone</th>
<th>Benzodiazepine</th>
<th>Tri Cyclic Antidepressants</th>
<th>Antipsychotic</th>
<th>Anti Histamine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Hypnosedatives</td>
<td>34.8%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

n=318 case records

- More patients with non-psychotic > psychotic disorders received hypnosedatives

- Statistically younger

- In most longstanding cases- clinical review had been documented
Discussion

- Over one third of this group were receiving at least one hypnosedative.

- The gender pattern, seen in general community, of women being prescribed more frequently was replicated in this population of psychiatric outpatients.

- The usual community pattern of greater prescription use as people age was not found, in fact the opposite statistical trend of greater use in younger patients emerged.
Discussion

• Once started = difficult to stop

• The thoughtful prescriber may wish to exercise caution before starting such a medication

• Future Research:
Limitations

- Data extracted from paper and electronic clinical records and we did not interview patients.
- We did not verify that patients were using the hypnosedatives as prescribed.
- A priori determination about the definition of hypnosedative prescribing.
- The sample size was insufficient to allow us to compare levels of prescribing among diagnostic subgroups.
- Data were collected from two outpatient services in New Zealand and may not be generalisable to other settings.
Questions and Discussion