

Use of antidepressants in psychiatric emergency departments. A prospective study from 2003 to 2006

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Introduction

The main use of antidepressant (AD) medicaments is to treat mood and anxiety disorders, being these two syndromic groups the most prevalent in emergency visits.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to focus on two main goals. Firstly, to assess the prevalence of the use of AD in a hospitalary psychiatry emergency service. Also, to describe the characteristics of the patients in which it has been used (given and/or adjusted) AD.

Methods

Using the data base of all the patients visited in the psychiatric department at Hospital del mar, Barcelona, during the period of time passed from 2003 to 2006, both included, it is analyzed the sociodemographic data (gender, age, homeless and immigrant status) and clinical data (syndromic diagnosis, personal psychiatric background, recent contact

with mental health services, substance use history and requirement or not of hospitalization) of the patients in which it has been used AD. This data was analyzed with SPSS 13.0 statistical package.

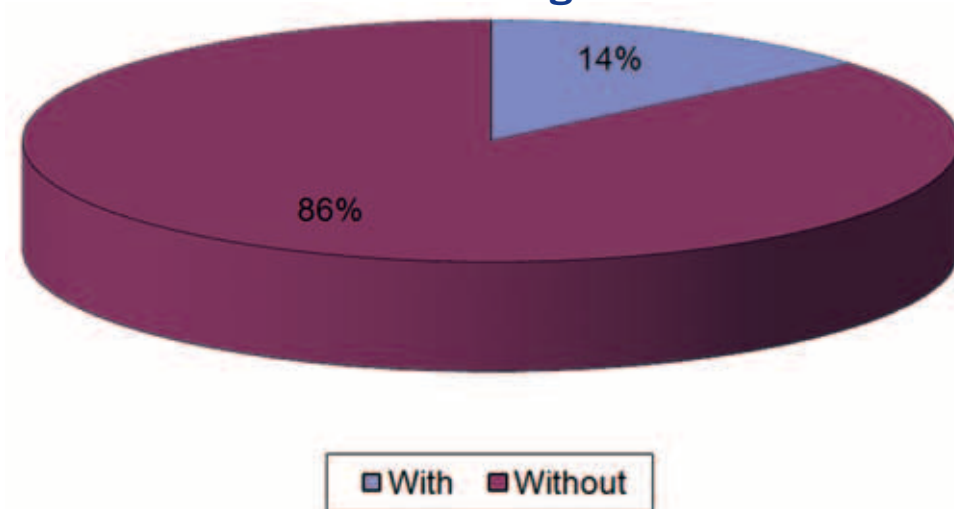
Results

During this period of time a total number of 8861 patients were visited. Out of these, 1232 (13.9%) patients required the use of AD. Regarding sociodemographic data it is observed a predominancy in the use of AD in the female gender (17.1 vs 10.4%), patients with an average age of 42.33 ± 16.2 and also no homeless status (14.4 vs 2.5%). All of them, $p < 0.001$. It is not observed any significant differences relating the immigrant status of the studied patients.

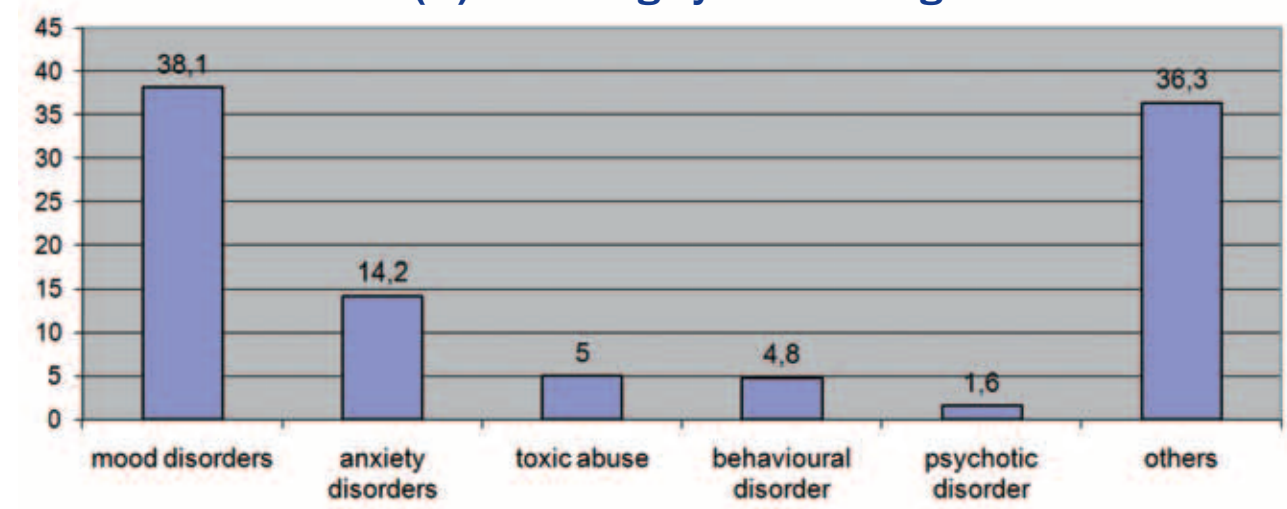
In terms of clinical variables, it is observed a predominancy in the use of AD in the patients without personal psychiatric background (17.7 vs 13%), patients that do not

have recent contact with mental health services (17.7 vs 10.8%) also in patients who do not require being hospitalised (16.4 vs 2%) and a predominancy too in the ones who are free of toxic abuse (16.9 vs 7.1%). All of them, $p < 0.001$. The syndromic diagnosis more frequently related to the use of AD in psychiatric emergencies in our sample are firstly mood disorders (38.1%) followed by anxiety disorders (14.2%) and toxic abuse (5%). The frequency in the use of AD during the period of time studied does not show significant differences.

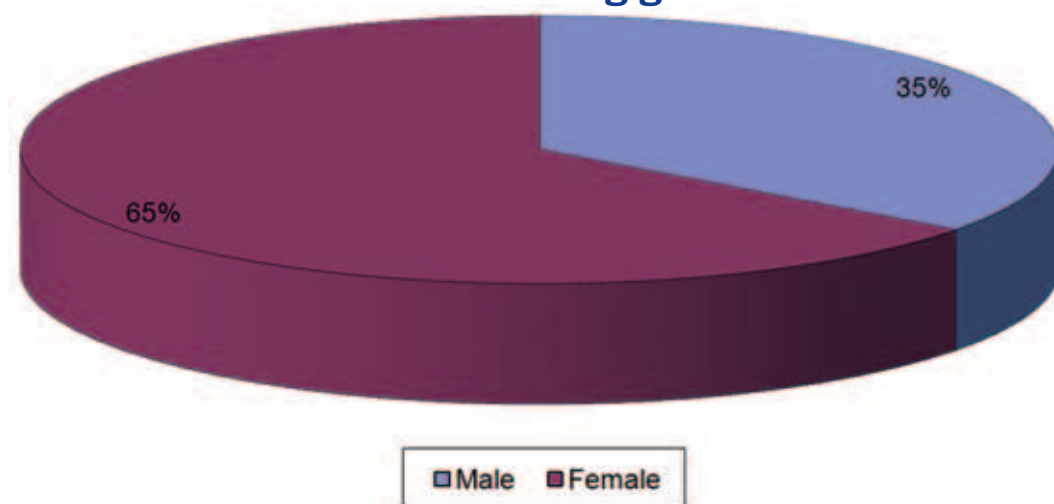
Use AD in emergencies



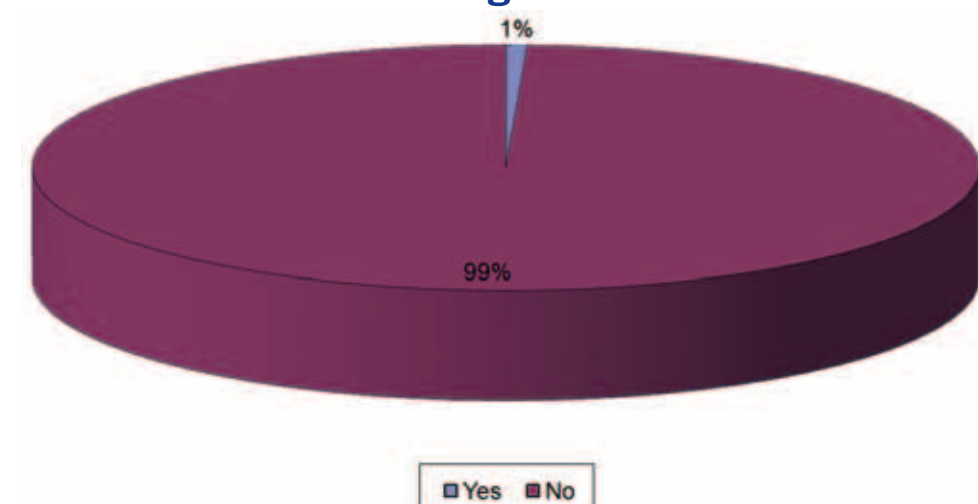
Use AD (%) according syndromic diagnosis



Use AD according gender



Use AD according homeless status



Conclusions

It is observed a great frequency in the use of AD in psychiatric emergencies that remains through the period of time studied. As it was expected there is a predominancy in the use of AD in the female patients, also in the patients without personal psychiatric background and without recent contact with mental health services (the cause of this

predominancy is probably the fact that these patients have not received treatment before being visited in an emergency service) and in the patients without toxic abuse. There is a conformity between syndromic diagnosis (related to AD use) expected and found in the sample (mood disorders and anxiety disorders).

References

1. Tognoni, G., 1999. Pharmacoepidemiology of psychotropic drugs in patients with severe mental disorders in Italy. Italian Collaborative Study Group on the Outcome of Severe Mental Disorders. *Eur J Clin Pharmacol* 55 (9): 685-90.
2. Manual de urgencias psiquiátricas. Barcelona, 2003. Masson.