

Utilization of Psychotropic Drugs in Taiwan: An Overview of Outpatient Sector in 2010

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Abstract

Objective: Pharmacological treatment in mental disorder has been getting popular over decades in Taiwan. Our aims are 1) to survey the utilization of psychotropic drugs in outpatient psychiatric services, 2) to know the difference of antipsychotic drugs prescriptions among psychiatrists and non-psychiatrists.

Methods: The sampling datasets from the Taiwan National Health Insurance Research Data base (NHIRD) served as data sources. We performed a survey comprising 886,219 participants who represented 3.8% of the entire claims for outpatient medical services in 2010. The measurement units used for psychotropic drugs were drug items and the number of defined daily doses (DDD). Besides overall description, the data of psychotropic drugs were analyzed by stratifying patient's age and chemical subgroup of antipsychotic drugs.

Results: Prescription of psychotropic drug items (n = 1,868,092) was 2.5% of the total drug items (n = 74,348,407) claimed. The psychotropic drugs were prescribed to 27.4% of the total patients and in 9.9% of the total visits. Major consumers of psychotropic drugs were between 35-74 years of age and there were more women than men. The psychiatrists prescribed 48.8% of total DDDs of psychotropic drugs and contributed 33.5% of all drug items. The number of DDDs per 1000 inhabitants per day for all kinds of psychotropic drugs was estimated to be 61.4 in Taiwan, where anxiolytics accounted 17.8, hypnotics and sedatives 27.5,

antipsychotics 4.6, antidepressants 7.8 and mood stabilizers 1.6. Ordered by total DDDs, the top 5 most frequently used antipsychotics were risperidone, quetiapine, sulpiride, haloperidol, and olanzapine.

Conclusions: The usage level of psychotropic drugs in Taiwan was growing. Women were more inclined to use psychotropics than men. Anxiolytics and hypnotics contributed the major portion of psychotropic drugs. Atypical antipsychotics became the main stream of antipsychotic drugs but haloperidol keeps playing an important role clinically.

Keywords: insomnia; surgery; operation; risk factor; longitudinal epidemiology