**ORAL PRESENTATION**

**Benzodiazepines in clinical practice: how to avoid and stop them?**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** To manage anxiety and insomnia GPs and psychiatrists prescribe benzodiazepines, which have proven to be very helpful in the short term. However, in the longer term, their use can cause many difficulties. Memory problems or falls, especially in older adults, are a concern. In addition, misuse and dependency often appear after a few weeks/months. Clinicians and patients therefore end up with a prescription difficult to stop that doesn’t help any more with the initial complaint. There are other non-pharmacological ways to cope with anxiety and insomnia, and teaching these techniques to clinicians and patients has proven to be efficient.

**Objectives:** The aim of this workshop is to provide GPs and psychiatrists with skills to avoid prescribing benzodiazepines that can translate into their clinical practice, and to stop them in patients who have developed an addiction.

**Methods:** Using an interactive approach, presenters will alternate clinical vignettes and theoretical points to keep the workshop as close as possible to clinical practice. In addition, three group sessions using basic CBT (Cognitive and Behavioural Techniques) and motivational interviewing techniques will be held during the workshop to make participants practice with each other the techniques explained during the workshop.

**Results:** Basic CBT and motivational interviewing techniques will be taught to the participants and they will have the opportunity to practice them during the workshop. More general knowledge of the benefits and risks of benzodiazepines will help clinicians prescribe based on evidence.

**Discussion and Conclusions:** We believe the workshop was designed to suit early career doctors’ needs and will contribute to decrease unnecessary prescriptions of benzodiazepines both in the community and hospital. A balanced view of risks and benefits and a very practical approach will ensure the knowledge and skills learnt translate into clinical practice.