Naturalistic study of a Long-Acting injectable antipsychotic drugs clinic

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Introduction: High rates of non-adherence to antipsychotics are commonly seen in the treatment of schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders. Long acting injectable antipsychotics (LAIs) are a pharmacological option increasingly used for their potential to effectively treat symptoms. Simultaneously, they guarantee good therapeutical compliance therefore preventing relapses and improving prognosis. Several recent studies advocate early use of LAIs challenging the old perspective they should be reserved for non-compliant patients.

Objectives: The authors of the current study intend to evaluate the patterns of prescription of LAIs in patients attending an LAI clinic at Centro Hospitalar Psiquiátrico de Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal.

Methods: For obtaining clinical data, the authors reviewed a database containing all patients who had an LAI regularly administered between the years of 2009 and 2014. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS®. Review of relevant literature obtained from online medical databases under the keywords “long acting antipsychotic” and “injectable antipsychotic”.

Results: A total of 1052 patients were included in the study. Among these, 64.3% (676) were male. All available LAIs (haloperidol, zuclopentixol, flupenthixol, fluphenazine, risperidone, and paliperidone) were used, more often in monotherapy, although there were patients where combination therapy was used. A great majority of patients were on typical LAIs. Two patients were found taking Olanzapine Palmoate although it is not available on the Portuguese market.

Discussion and Conclusion: This study uses a large sample which allows us to discuss several issues: patients under LAI were found to include not only patients with a diagnosis of schizophrenic disorder but also bipolar, schizoaffective, and delusional disorders, intellectual disability and Not Otherwise Specified Psychosis, which raises the question of off-label use of LAIs; frequency of relapse and the results of different drugs will be discussed with an emphasis on comparison between typical and atypical antipsychotics. This study represents the first step of a wider study being conducted about LAI use in mental disorders.