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POLYPHARMACY IN PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENTS: DATA FROM AMSP  
(ARZNEIMITTELSICHERHEIT IN DER PSYCHIATRIE), A EUROPEAN  
PHARMACOVIGILANCE SYSTEM

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Introduction: Psychotropic polypharmacy is widely used in routine clinical practice although  
there is still a substantial deficit in established knowledge about combination and  
augmentation treatments. Polypharmacy is related with a higher risk of adverse drug  
reactions and incompliance.

Methods: On two reference days per hospital and per year, the following data are recorded  
for all patients on the wards under AMSP surveillance: all drugs applied on that day with the  
daily dosage for psychotropic drugs, ICD diagnosis, age, and sex. Data is stored at the study  
center in Munich. We evaluated data from 2000 (N=5669) and 2007 (N=8346).

Results: From 2000 to 2007 inpatient prescriptions including three or more drugs increased  
significantly from 59.4% to 69.3% ( $\chi^2$ : 144.913; df:1;  $p < 0.001$ ). Furthermore the  
percentage of inpatients being prescribed three or more psychotropics increased  
significantly from 36.5% in 2000 to 47.97% in 2007 ( $\chi^2$ : 180.01; df:1;  $p < 0.001$ ).

Investigating further, which inpatients, diagnosed according to ICD-10, tend to be treated  
with more than two psychotropics, we found that this was more common in inpatients, who  
had an F2., F3. or F9. ICD-10 diagnosis. Especially inpatients with a bipolar disorder (F31.)  
showed an extremely high rate for psychotropic polypharmacy with three or more  
psychotropic drugs, with rates of 63,8% in 2000 and 75,2% in 2007.

Conclusion: Polypharmacy is still gaining ground. Our results show that psychotropic agents  
are commonly used in combination; therefore further studies evaluating assumable positive  
results of psychotropic combinations are needed.