

The cost-effectiveness of depot antipsychotic therapy in Estonia

Summary

Objectives: To assess the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of depot antipsychotic drugs as compared to conventional oral antipsychotic drugs in the treatment of psychiatric conditions, and to evaluate medication adherence among schizophrenia patients in Estonia.

Methods: Literature reviews for evidence on effectiveness and cost-effectiveness were carried out in relevant databases. To evaluate the treatment costs in relation to adherence to medication, data on the use of health services and reimbursed medicines by patients with schizophrenia was obtained from Estonian Health Insurance Fund for the years 2010–2014.

Results: Numerous studies have demonstrated, that the efficacy, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of oral and depot preparations of typical and second-generation antipsychotics is not much different in patients, who are compliant to treatment. However, among schizophrenia patients with poor compliance, the depot preparations have been highly effective in reducing the relapse and hospitalisation rates.

Altogether 2071 patients were hospitalised in Estonia in 2012 because of schizophrenia and 41% of them were not taking antipsychotic medication in regular basis during one year prior to hospitalisation. A mirror-image analysis of 237 schizophrenia patients 1 year before and 1 year after initiating depot treatment showed reduction in number of hospitalisations (from 1.5 to 0.7), length of stay in hospital (13.4% to 5.5%) and treatment costs (decline 100,000-180,000 euros per 100 lifeyears).

Conclusions: Organizational rearrangements were proposed to increase the availability and use of depot preparations of typical and second-generation antipsychotics in order to improve medication adherence and reduce the relapse and hospitalisation rates among schizophrenia patients in Estonia.

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