Clozapine – How Do We Measure Up?

Proportion of Eligible Patients Offered Clozapine in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde's North East Esteem Service

Dr Josie Nott (CT3), Dr Matthew Beattie (ST4). Consultant supervisor: Dr Rajeev Krishnadas
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Scotland, UK

Background

The NICE Quality Standard for psychosis and schizophrenia [1] sets out that 'Adults with schizophrenia that have not responded adequately to treatment with at least 2 antipsychotic drugs are offered clozapine.' This is a key criteria examined in the National Clinical Audit of Psychosis [2] and national data for Early Intervention in Psychosis (EIP) services in England, Wales and Ireland is freely available.

Aims

This project set out to provide similar data for our EIP service in Glasgow.

1. To quantify the proportion of eligible patients who have been offered or who have received clozapine in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde's North East Esteem Service.
2. To compare this with RCPsych National Clinical Audit of Psychosis data.

Methods

Our inclusion criteria were any patient who had:

- been on the North East Esteem EIP caseload for at least 6 months by 01/04/23
- a diagnosis of first episode of psychosis
- had three or more antipsychotic trials

Data was collected via electronic records (EMIS) and prescribing systems (Hepma).

Results

55 patients were initially identified as being on North East Esteem caseload for over 6 months as of 01/04/23 and having a primary diagnosis of first episode psychosis.

16 of these patients had at least three or more trials of antipsychotic medication.

5 of these patients (31%) had either been offered or trialled clozapine (2) or were prescribed clozapine (3).

31% Eligible patients offered clozapine in GGC sample

52% Comparative rate in England [2]

50% Comparative rate in Ireland [2]

85% Comparative rate in Wales [2]

Conclusion

Clozapine provision for first episode psychosis patients under care of NHS GGC NE Esteem falls well below national averages. This may reflect the more challenging sociodemographic profile of North East Glasgow patients compared with national average profile. For example: language barrier, lack of transportation, social isolation, temporary accommodation, which all make administration of clozapine less practical. There is currently no established protocol for outpatient titration of clozapine in NHS GGC and this is done on exceptional basis only. Ability to offer clozapine is therefore limited by availability of inpatient beds.

There were limitations to this study, including the validity of comparing one sector of the city with national averages and some ambiguity in data collection around what constituted an 'adequate' trial of antipsychotic in the context of intolerance. Future areas of consideration include potential development of an outpatient clozapine titration service or provision of a mobile clozapine service within Esteem.

References

1. National Institute for Clinical Excellence (2015): Psychosis and schizophrenia: NICE quality standards QS80. London: National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Available from: NICE quality standards | Goals and outcome measures | Psychosis and schizophrenia | CKS | NICE
2. Royal College of Psychiatrists (2022) National Clinical Audit of Psychosis –National Report for the Early Intervention in Psychosis Audit 2021/2022. London: Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership. Available from: www.rcpsych.ac.uk/NCAP