

Physical Health Monitoring in Patients on Antipsychotics

An Audit in Primary Care

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Background

Antipsychotics are effective and widely prescribed medications in the UK, for patients with psychopathology as well as those with dementia, anxiety, depression and disorders related to sleep¹. However, their use is limited by their extensive side effect profile. A common category of side effects are the adverse metabolic consequences, such as impaired glucose tolerance, hyperlipidaemia and weight gain².

The National Institute of Clinical Excellence, the British National Formulary and the Maudsley Prescribing Guidelines in Psychiatry all recommend annual monitoring of physical health parameters to intervene and thus prevent such complications³. Despite this, rates of monitoring across the country are currently low at approximately 29%⁴.

The consequence of this is increased patient morbidity and mortality and increased costs for the healthcare system long-term⁵.

Methods

The audit was conducted in a three-site general practice surgery in the East of England, analysing a twelve-month period between 2018-2019 in 40 adults (>18 years), half of whom were on the Severe Mental Illness (SMI) Register.

Data was collected on the occurrence of an annual review, as well as whether the following ten physical health parameters had been measured.

The criteria according to NICE are that all patients on antipsychotics must be seen and have the above ten parameters recorded in their electronic notes on an annual basis⁶.

Based on current guidelines, 100% of patients should be having physical health checks annually.

Given that it is the first audit, the standard was chosen to be 80% for each individual parameter, as well as an overall standard of 80% for $\geq 8/10$ markers being measured. This falls within the current range of fulfillment of physical health monitoring outlined in QoF guidelines (50-90%)⁷.

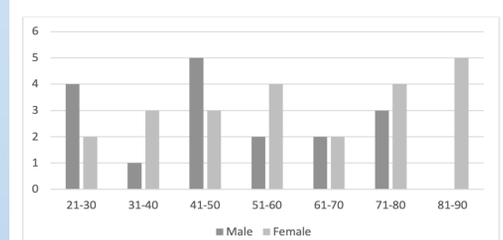
Ten physical health parameters:

Weight/BMI	Pulse
Waist circumference	Blood pressure
Blood lipids	Smoking
Fasting blood glucose /HbA1c	Alcohol
	Activity levels
	Diet ⁶

Aim and objectives

The objective of the audit was to analyze whether all adult patients on antipsychotics medications had their physical health monitored annually as per current recommendations; done with the aim of improving physical health monitoring in this patient population.

Graph 1: Column chart showing sample demographics in terms of gender and age



Results

95% of patients had been seen annually and the rates of individual parameter monitoring varied from 0-77.5% and therefore did not meet the 80% target. The overall standard for 80% of patients to have $\geq 8/10$ parameters measured was also not met. Waist circumference was persistently missed, whilst other parameters were addressed 50% of the time or more. A difference was also noted between SMI and non-SMI groups, with the average number of parameters addressed out of ten being 6.57 and 5.38 respectively. The rural site also appeared to have the lowest rates of monitoring at an average of 5.5 parameters.

	Number who had an annual check up	Number who had 10/10 parameters checked	Number who had $\geq 8/10$ parameters checked	Percentage of those seen who had $\geq 8/10$ parameters checked
SMI	19/20	0	8	42.1%
Non-SMI	19/20	0	3	15.7%

Conclusions and next steps

Our audit highlights a great need for physical health monitoring to be improved in adult patients taking antipsychotics, most notably in rural areas. This can be done by educating professionals who will be conducting the review, providing a 'check-list' for one to follow during an appointment, and implementing an alert system on SystemOne as a reminder to schedule an annual review and a telephone call as a reminder to the patient, as the 12-month mark approaches. These improvements will be assessed with a re-audit in the near future.

References

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