

Audit on the review of anticholinergic burden in older adults referred to a memory assessment and management service

Oladimeji Olafisoye¹ (Specialty Doctor), Ujeet Shrestha¹ (GP Trainee), Helena Xuereb¹ (Consultant, Old Age Psychiatry)
¹Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Background

- Anticholinergic medications have cognitive side effects and prolonged exposure has been demonstrated to increase the risk of dementia¹.
- The National Institute on Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) recommended that the clinician should be aware that some commonly prescribed medicines have anticholinergic properties.
- NICE advised medication review for anticholinergic burden in people with dementia and to consider alternatives with less anticholinergic effects².

Aims

- To evaluate the clinical practice of the older adult memory assessment service with regard to the identification and review of the anticholinergic burden of patients according to NICE guidelines.
- To make a case for the introduction of structured medication review as part of the Trust's memory assessment protocol

Method

- From a total of 597 patients referred to the LPFT MAMS in October and November 2019 174 were from Lincoln and Gainsborough areas and were selected for the audit
- Data collected from the electronic records of these patients included age, gender, referral pathway, duration of cognitive symptoms, scores obtained on cognitive tests, final diagnosis, use of anticholinergic medications, and anticholinergic medication review.
- Anticholinergic burden score for each patient calculated using an online tool The Anticholinergic Effect on Cognition Tool (MEDICHEC)³.

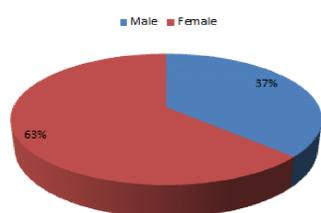
Method

- The anticholinergic burden score indicates the anticholinergic properties of a medication and cumulative score of 2 or more is significant
- Inclusion criteria: All referrals to LPFT MAMS in Lincoln and Gainsborough areas who were assessed by the service
- Exclusion criteria: Those that were not assessed for various reasons including those that declined assessment or were deceased shortly after referral or those still awaiting assessment as at the time the audit was conducted
- 40 were excluded from the study

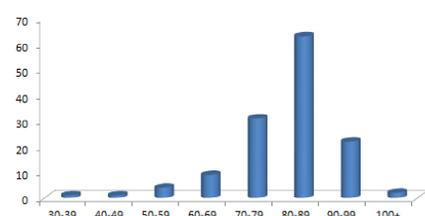
Results

- The average duration of cognitive symptoms prior to review was 24 months.
- The most common diagnosis was Alzheimer's dementia diagnosed in about 21.8% of all assessed patients.

Patient Characteristics- Sex



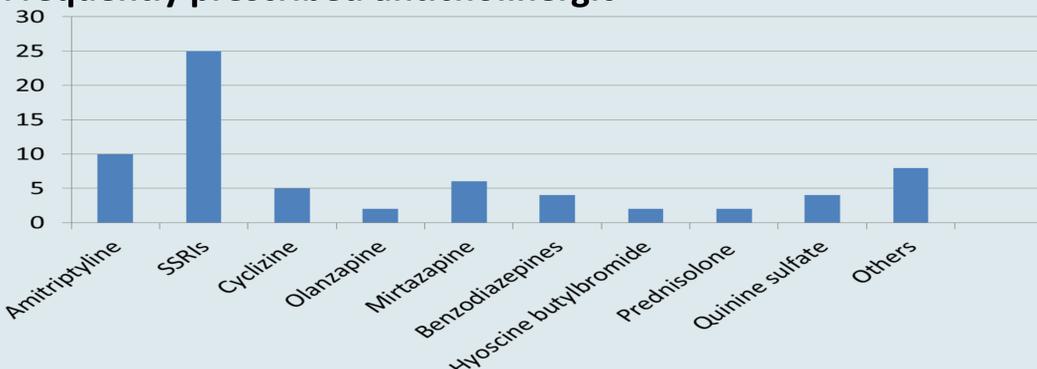
Age Distribution



Results

- 51 (38.1%) patients were prescribed anticholinergic medication.
- 16 (11.9%) of those patients were prescribed 2 or more anticholinergic medications.
- The calculated anticholinergic burden scores for our audit ranged from 0-5, 20 (14.9%) scored 2 or more.
- There was no evidence of review of anticholinergic medications of any of the patients as it is not included in the Trust's Memory Assessment Pathway.

Frequently prescribed anticholinergic



Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Enifeni Afeez (MTI) and Hugh Cornwell who assisted with data collection

Table showing number of those prescribed Anticholinergic

10. Use of anticholinergics	Yes = 51
	No = 58
	N/A = 25
11. If yes, how many anticholinergics? = 51	1 = 35
	2 = 12
	3 = 3
	4 = 1

N/A- Not available

Table showing anticholinergic burden scores

13. Anticholinergic burden scale score (using Mediceck tool)	0 = 58
	1 = 24
	2 = 5
	3 = 5
	4 = 7
	5 = 3
	N/A = 32
14. Review of anticholinergics	Yes = 0
	No = 68
	N/A = 66

N/A- Not available

Conclusion

- This audit identifies the need for review of anticholinergic burden to be included in the Trust Dementia Assessment Pathway
- We will be recommending review of anticholinergic burden using MEDICHEC to be included as part of The Trust Assessment Pathway for Dementia.
- We plan to do a re-audit six months after the service agrees to implement our recommendations

References

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2. National Institute of health and Clinical Excellence (2018) Dementia: assessment, management and support for people living with dementia and their carers NICE guideline [NG97] Available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng97/chapter/Recommendations#managing-non-cognitive-symptoms>
3. South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Assessing Medication for Dizziness, Drowsiness and Anticholinergic Burden (Using the Anticholinergic Effect On Cognition Tool) available at <https://www.medicheck.com/>