

Reference

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44. Doctors' awareness and perception of prescription medicine misuse in Singapore

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Objective: To establish the level of awareness and perception of prescription medicine misuse among doctors working in the Emergency Department (ED) in Singapore.

Methods: An online questionnaire was emailed to doctors working in six Singapore EDs. Demographic data (age, gender and job designation), awareness of prescription medicine misuse in their practice, whether they suspected their patients misused prescription medicines and whether they required help in managing such patients were collected. The drugs surveyed were benzodiazepines, Z-drugs (zopiclone/zolpidem), opioid analgesics, codeine-containing cough-mixtures, prescription stimulants, pregabalin, gabapentin, and baclofen.

Results: Overall, 102 doctors completed the survey: 55.9% male, median (IQR) age 38 (25–55) years; 24.5% medical officers/residents, 22.5% resident physicians (fellows), and 54.5% consultants. The majority of respondents (76.5%) were concerned about misuse of prescription drugs by their patients, and 86.3% were aware that they might be prescribing to patients who were misusing medicines. Codeine-containing cough-mixtures were the most common medicine that doctors thought their patients were misusing (Table 1). In total, 80.8% of the respondents felt they needed help to deal with patients who were prescription medicine misusers and 65.7% indicated that more training in this area was required: 15.1% preferred face-to-face training, 37.9% preferred online training, and 47.0% were keen for both face-to-face and online training. Implementation of clinical guidelines on management of these patients, online resources, and a hotline for physicians to call for help were some of the proposed additional educational resources suggested by respondents.

Conclusion: The majority of doctors surveyed were aware that their patients could be misusing prescription medicines and felt that they needed help/training to deal these patients. These findings will be used to improve training to help doctors manage such patients, to ensure that their prescribing is appropriate and to decrease the risk of prescription medicine misuse.

Table 1. Types of drugs that doctors working in Emergency Departments (ED) in Singapore suspect their patients are misusing.

Drug	Do you suspect that any of your patients are misusing the following drugs?	
	Yes	No
Benzodiazepines	64.7%	35.3%
Z-drugs (zopiclone, zolpidem)	45.1%	54.9%
Opioids analgesics	83.3%	16.7%
Codeine-containing cough mixture	92.2%	7.8%
Prescription stimulants	10.8%	89.2%
Pregabalin	6.9%	93.1%
Gabapentin	8.8%	91.2%
Baclofen	64.7%	35.3%

45. Intentional opioid exposures with benzodiazepine co-ingestants in the US and Europe as reported to the RADARS® System Global Toxikosurveillance Network

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Objective: This study aimed to determine what proportion of intentional exposures involving opioids also included a benzodiazepine as reported to participating Researched Abuse, Diversion and Addiction-Related Surveillance (RADARS®) System Global Toxikosurveillance Network (GTNet) poison centres in the United States and Europe.

Methods: GTNet was established in 2011 as a means of collaboration between countries to provide information about prescription drugs involved in acute health events as reported to participating poison centres worldwide, including intentional and unintentional exposures. Intentional exposures involving prescription opioids from 2012 through 2016 were analyzed from participating poison centres in Italy (Milan), Germany (Göttingen), France (Paris), and the US (Poison Center Program; 50 of 55 regional poison centres). We examined the percentage of intentional exposures by country that also involved a benzodiazepine. In addition, we examined the percentage of opioid and benzodiazepine co-ingestion intentional exposures that were misuse/abuse exposures.

Results: Of the 4 countries evaluated, the US had the highest percentage of opioid intentional exposures where a benzodiazepine was also reported ($n = 42,800$; 24.9%), followed by Italy ($n = 117$; 15.5%), Germany ($n = 251$; 14.5%), and France ($n = 49$; 12.0%). Among opioid intentional exposures, 20.3% were reported as misuse/abuse exposures in the US, 28.2% in Italy, 22.7% in Germany, and 12.2% in France.

Conclusion: Differences across countries may reflect differences in populations utilizing poison centres (general population versus medical providers), prescribing patterns within each country, and the extent of opioid misuse within each country.

46. A nine year retrospective review of trends in oral anticoagulant enquiries to the UK National Poisons Information Service

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