

Polypharmacy in patients with advanced Huntington's Disease admitted in a Nursing Home

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Background:

Patients with Huntington's disease (HD) in the end stage are often treated with many drugs, especially psychotropic medications increase the risk of side effects, influencing quality of life.

Objective: The aim of this cross-sectional study was to describe prevalence of polypharmacy in a long term care population of patients with advanced HD, focusing specifically on the combination of psychotropic medication influencing different nervous pathways.

Methods: Cross-sectional data on medication prescriptions was obtained for all 65 HD patients residing in our specialized Huntington's Disease Center in the Netherlands.

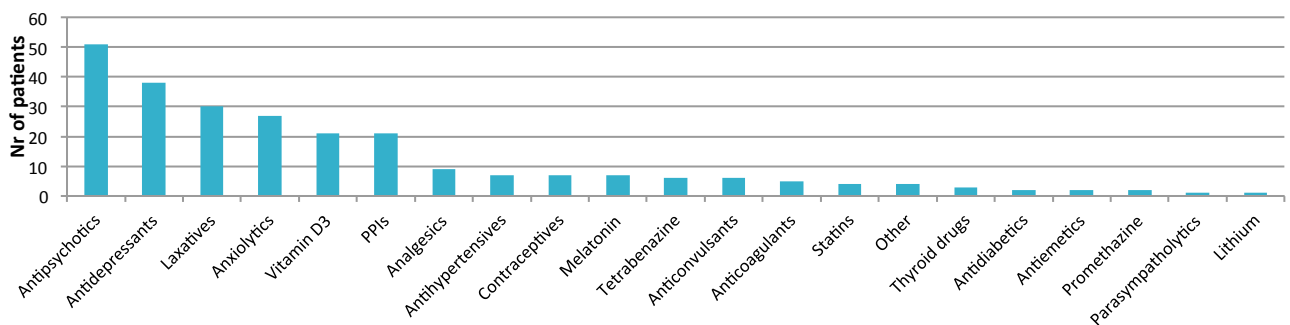


Figure 1. Prevalence of medication classes prescribed in HD residents. Nr; Number, PPIs; protonpumpinhibitors.

	N (%)	Mean number of Prescriptions (SD)	Polypharmacy (%)	Psychotropic Polypharmacy (%)
Total	65	4.4 (2.4)	28 (43.1)	45 (69.2)
Male	25 (38.5)	3.9 (2.8)	8 (32.0)	14 (56.0)
Female	40 (61.5)	4.7 (2.0)	20 (50.0)	31 (77.5)
<50 years	17 (26.2)	3.5 (1.9)	4 (23.5)	10 (22.2)
50-59 years	21 (32.3)	5.0 (2.7)	12 (57.1)	17 (37.8)
>60 years	27 (41.5)	4.4 (2.2)	12 (44.4)	18 (40.0)
Stage I	0	-	-	1 (100.0)
Stage II	1 (1.5)	7.0 (-)	1 (100.0)	5 (71.4)
Stage III	7 (10.8)	3.0 (1.8)	2 (28.6)	9 (50.5)
Stage IV	18 (27.7)	3.8 (2.8)	5 (27.8)	30 (66.7)
Stage V	39 (60.0)	4.8 (2.1)	20 (51.3)	



Results:

In our study population 43% of the patients had polypharmacy and 69% of patients used 2 or more psychotropic drugs. Psychotropic polypharmacy was neither related to age ($p=0.31$) nor to the Total Functional Capacity (TFC) score (0.20).

Conclusion: The majority of HD patients in this study have psychotropic polypharmacy with the risk of side effects.



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