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PREVALENCE OF RESTLESS LEGS SYNDROME IN PSYCHIATRIC POPULATION

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Objective: Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a common condition, with reported prevalence between 1-15% in general population. To the best of our knowledge, there is no data on the prevalence of RLS in psychiatric inpatient population.

Method: With the exception of drug/alcohol dependent and gerontopsychiatric patients, patients consecutively admitted to the Centre of Mental Health at the Klinikum Ingolstadt between December 2006 and March 2007 were interviewed by an experienced clinician to assess the presence of RLS. The severity of the symptoms was assessed by the International Restless Legs Severity Scale (IRLS).

Results: 214 patients were interviewed (age 45.6 ± 14.8 , 60% females). 22 patients (10.3%) fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for RLS (age 49.2 ± 15.0 , 73% females, mean IRLS score 20 ± 8.9). In addition, 6.3% of RLS symptoms free patients reported to have had these symptoms in the history. There were slightly more RLS patients diagnosed with an affective disorder compared to the entire sample distribution and there were considerably less RLS patients in the group of psychotic disorders. 4.3% of the total data sample had a positive family history for RLS. As assessed by simple regression analysis there were no particular differences in medication patters between RLS patients and the entire sample.

Conclusion: We report here for the first time the prevalence of RLS in psychiatric inpatients. The prevalence rate is on the upper range of that reported for the general population. In addition, 6.3% of RLS symptoms free inpatients reported to have had these symptoms in the history.

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