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AUDIT ON USE OF HYPNOTICS FOR INSOMNIA IN COMPARISON WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CLINICAL EXCELLENCE GUIDELINES

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Objective: To compare prescribing practices of hypnotics against NICE guidelines (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) and to develop recommendations with action plan. The NICE recommends:

- Due consideration should be given to non-pharmacological measures prior to hypnotic prescription.
- Hypnotics should be prescribed for short periods of time only (maximum 4 weeks)
- The drug with the lowest purchase cost should be prescribed.
- Switching from one hypnotic to another should only occur if a patient experiences adverse effects.

Methodology: The audit tool was developed. The data was compiled using medical records of the patients who were seen during a specified three month time period in an out-patient setting. A total sample size of 308 was generated out of which 41(12.5%) were being prescribed hypnotics. The medical records of these 41 patients were scrutinised to gather evidence whether NICE guidelines were adhered to. The data was analysed using the tool recommended by NICE.

Results: The significant results are:-

- Only 25% of the patients were advised Non-pharmacological measures.
- Duration of prescription ranged from one week to more than 10 years, with 33% approximately being prescribed for less than one year, and 10% being prescribed for more than 10 years.
- There is no evidence that consideration was given to cost while prescribing.
- Only in one patient hypnotic was switched. However, there was no evidence of adverse reaction which could be directly related to the hypnotic prescribed.

Conclusions: The overall compliance with guidelines was found to be 42%.