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THE USE OF BENZODIAZEPINES AMONG PATIENTS HOSPITALIZED IN MEDICAL SERVICES

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Objectives: Benzodiazepines are commonly prescribed since the 1960, when they replaced barbiturics. Although there is no doubt about their efficacy in treating anxiety, insomnia or other psychiatric disorders, we should also take into account the fact that these drugs are easily misused.

In this work we analyze the intake of benzodiazepines among patients hospitalized due to medical problems.

Methods: Retrospective review of clinical histories of patients attended by the Drug Unit of the Psychiatry Service in the last twelve months. Bibliographical review of the theme. Data analyzed using the SPSS software 15.0 version.

Results: 45 patients were subjected to our survey, 41 of them male. 66% were *HIV Positive patients*, and the most frequent cause of hospitalization was *pneumonia (51´1%)*. Most of the patients attended were *drug abusers (see the graphic below)*. When the benzodiazepines abusers were asked how they obtained them, 40´6% recognized they got them without prescription, 25% said they got them legally, and 34´4 answered that they got them legally but also without prescription. 62´5% of the patients usually took *alprazolam*.

Conclusions: *Benzodiazepine abuse, in particular alprazolam, is quiet common among the patients we see.*

In half of the cases the use of benzodiazepines could have worsen the prognosis of the patients.