Reviewer’s report

Title: Adherence to antidepressant therapy and pattern of prescriptions for major depressive patients in a psychiatric hospital in Thailand

Version: 1 Date: 24 March 2010

Reviewer: Michael Moore

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written and clear article describing estimated adherence to antidepressant medication (using a validated measure) in an outpatient population treated by a psychiatric hospital in Thailand. In order to fully appraise the validity of the data presented an international reader will need at least some description of the health delivery system in Thailand, ie how many patients will be treated in primary care with depression and how many in institutions such as that described. The data are severely limited as it seems feasible that patients initiated on antidepressant medication may obtain continued supplies from primary care providers. Without more information about the health set up we are unable to estimate whether this is unlikely or likely. If large proportions are likely to receive medication from primary care then the data have little intrinsic value. (essential)

Abstract

The results are incomplete, I think the the overall adherence should be presented first and a description of the measure (ie MPR>80%) (essential)

Study population

It would help if we knew more about the patients treated ie some estimate of depression severity in those treated? Is this a mixed group similar to that treated in primary care or a more severe group similar to those treated in secondary care in other countries. (desirable)

Results

It is impossible to interpret these without some estimate of prescriptions received elsewhere as mentioned above. The authors imply that if only one attendance then they assume that patients receive ongoing prescriptions from their regular healthcare facility. (essential)

I could not get the figures regarding adherence from table 3 which is poorly set out. (essential)

Discussion

It is plausible that those attending only once simply discontinue medication, in the uk nearly 50% of those first prescribed discontinue medication in less than 2 month (GPRD data in preparation for publication) In the same data set there are
clear differences in adherence between antidepressant classes and I suspect there is a lack of power in this study to show this, the authors should provide an estimate of the adherence difference this study is powered to show- if as I suspect it is underpowered then this section becomes redundant and a statement regarding lack of power to show adherence differences between medications would suffice.(essential)

The authors also selectively quote the meta analysis (22) which did show differential adherance with SSRI and TCA and a separate comparison to heterocyclic TCAs was equivocal.(essential)

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare I have no competing interest