

Abstract

Background: The use of psychoactive prescription drugs (PPDs) in the patient population is poorly studied in Czechia.

Aims: (i) To investigate the prevalence of PPDs use; (ii) to estimate the extent of doctor shopping (DS); (iii) to explore the association between the repeated use of PPD, DS and subsequent addiction care.

Design and setting: Pharmacoepidemiological study using the prescription database and the database of reimbursed health services of health insurance company Zamestnanecka pojistovna Skoda (2012-2021).

Participants: Insurees (n=146,177; male n=71,013; female n=75,164) represented by approximately 340,000 health records.

Measurements: To identify drug use in the form of DS we analyzed prescription overlaps from multiple health care providers. The association between repeated use of PPD and provided health services was determined by analyzing the drug history of insurees who received any type of addiction service.

Findings: We found that more than half of the insurees who used the opioid analgesic also used anxiolytic drugs in the same year. The highest proportion of insurees with DS was related to stimulant use (3.37%). Regarding opioid analgesics and benzodiazepines, the proportions were similar (OA 2.25%; BZD 2.37%). The number of duplicit prescriptions per doctor shopper was the highest in benzodiazepines (5.65). A significant relationship between PPDs use and addiction services was found only for stimulants (OR=7.77; 95% CI 3.15–19.4), antidepressants (OR=3.14; 95% CI 2.12–4.66) and antipsychotics (OR=5.99; 95% CI 3.91–9.17).

Conclusion: This study brings new evidence on the use of psychoactive prescription drugs and doctor shopping in Czechia. Findings may inform the clinical practice and health care decision makers. Further research using the prescription databases is warranted.