Multiple psychotropic medication use for youths: a two-state comparison.

dosReis S¹, Zito JM, Safer DJ, Gardner JF, Puccia KB, Owens PL.

Author information

Abstract

OBJECTIVE: The aim of this study was to compare multiple psychotropic use among youths enrolled in two U.S. mid-Atlantic state Medicaid and state Children's Health Insurance Programs (SCHIP).

METHODS: Administrative data were used to examine multiple psychotropic use among youths less than 20 years of age and who were continuously enrolled in Medicaid or SCHIP programs in two states during 1999. Multiple psychotropic use referred to multiclass combinations and was defined by the number of months of multiple use. Main outcome measures were the prevalence of multiple psychotropic use and months of multiple use. Demographic and clinical characteristics, mental health visits, and common combinations were examined according to months of multiple use.

RESULTS: Among continuously enrolled youths, 21%-22% had at least one mental health-related visit, 8%-10% received a psychotropic medication, and 2%-3% received multiple psychotropic medications. Nearly one third (28%-30%) of youths with any psychotropic use received multiple medications, of which almost half was for 5-12 months. Multiclass use was more common in male, white, aged 10-14, disabled, and foster-care youths. Stimulants with antidepressants, antipsychotics, or alpha-agonists were the most common combinations.

CONCLUSIONS: Multiple use occurred in nearly one third of youths with any psychotropic treatment. Additional research is needed to investigate switching patterns and the effectiveness of combined pharmacotherapy.

PMID: 15741788 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]