

PEER-REVIEW OF MEDICAL PRESCRIPTION OF PRAMIPEXOLE IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM IN THE SOUTH OF BRAZIL: EVIDENCE OF AN IRRATIONAL PRESCRIPTION OF DOPAMINERGIC AGONISTS FOR PARKINSON'S DISEASE

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Abstract: OBJECTIVE: Parkinson's disease has a strong economical impact for the Brazilian public health system. In Rio Grande do Sul we have noticed an increasing demand for pramipexole in the last few years. According to medical literature and Brazilian Guidelines for Parkinson's Disease, the main indications for dopamine agonist use are the first treatment for young patients and the control of motor fluctuations and dyskinesias in patients with advanced disease. With the objective of evaluating prescription patterns of pramipexole we reviewed a sample of patients who required public funding for their treatment to our regional Public Health Department. METHODS: all pramipexole requests from february to december 2007 were reviewed by an expert review group. RESULTS: 267 requests were analysed: 53,4% were women and 60,7% were older than 65 years. In 48,7% of cases no information was sent to justify the medication request. In the remaining cases, the reasons stated for pramipexole request were: first treatment (13,5% of cases), motor fluctuations/dyskinesias (12,7%), and absence of benefit with levodopa (13,1%). All of the patients who reported levodopa failure were using low levodopa doses. Only 28% of the patients met the Brazilian inclusion criteria for public funding for this treatment. CONCLUSIONS: Here we show evidence of malprescription of dopamine agonists and irrational use of public resources. In Brazil, therapy with dopamine agonists is around 10 times more expensive than with levodopa. Educational actions on doctor's decision urges in our State to protect patients and reduce costs.