

## Psychotropic Drug Users in the Prefecture of Fthiotis: A Prescription-Based Study

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**Key words:** Psychotropic drugs, prescription, age, gender, urban residence

**S u m m a r y.** *The aim of this study was to record the diagnoses most frequently mentioned in psychiatric prescriptions and the psychotropic drug users' profiles (age, place of residence) occurring in the Prefecture of Fthiotis (Greece). A total of 12,966 prescriptions that considered social workers (and their families) were checked (originally prescribed within a two-month period). Of these, 867 (6.69%) considered psychotropic medication prescribing and were then thoroughly evaluated. We, herein, present some preliminary results of our study.*

### INTRODUCTION

A practitioner's decision to treat a psychiatric patient assumes that the patient has been evaluated and diagnosed correctly (1). Prescription of psychotropic medication is by far the most commonly chosen kind of therapy. The aim of our study was to record the diagnoses most frequently recorded in such prescriptions, the psychotropic drug users' profiles and the psychotropic drug prescription errors occurring in the Prefecture of Fthiotis (Greece). We, herein, present some preliminary results of our study.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Psychotropic drug prescriptions that considered public workers themselves (or members of their families) were recorded during a two-month period (August-September 2005) in the Prefecture of Fthiotis (Greece). All measures were taken in order to establish anonymity of the records. Emphasis was given on the following demographic characteristics of the psychotropic drug users: a) prescription diagnosis, b) gender, c) place of residence (urban or not) and d) age. We classified the diagnoses into the following (according to the DSM-IV-TR classification criteria) (2) categories: a) organic psychosis, b) psychotic disorders, c) affective disorders (depression, bipolar disorders, rest affective disorders),

d) anxiety disorders, e) somatoform disorders, f) sleep disorders, g) personality disorders, and h) other disorders. The SPSS (version 7.5) statistical package for Microsoft Windows (SPSS, Chicago, IL) was used for the statistical analysis of the results.

### RESULTS

From a total of 12,966 prescriptions that were checked for, 867 (6.69%) considered psychotropic medication. Table 1 presents: a) the frequency of each recorded diagnosis, b) the female and male user percentage among users of each diagnosis category, c) the place of residence of these users, and d) their average age.

### DISCUSSION

The preliminary analysis of our data shows that depression is the main reason for psychotropic drug prescription (with a frequency of 44% - both sexes included), followed by somatoform, psychotic, anxiety and sleep disorders. Organic disorders occur mainly in advanced age (75 years on average), while psychotic, personality, bipolar and other affective disorders are frequent in adulthood (see Table 1). Moreover, urbanization (and all of the stress, anxiety, isolation or other kind of problems that this entails) seems to be a contributing factor to the expression of psychiatric disorders, a fact that has already been established (3).

*Acknowledgements:* K. Kalopita, E. Gkrouzman and A. Zarros are students of the Medical School of the University of Athens. The authors wish to acknowledge their appreciation to Mrs Irene Chiligianni-Sakka (Head of the Department of Social Security Inspection for the Public Workers, Prefecture of Fthiotis, Lamia, Greece) for her significant assistance.

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Table 1.

Demographic aspects concerning psychotropic drug users in Fthiotis (a Prefecture in central Greece). N: number of cases, F: female users, M: male users, UR: urban residence, AA: average age (in years). UR and AA refer to both sexes.

Disorder diagnosed	N (%)	F (%)	M (%)	UR (%)	AA (years)
Organic psychosis:	27 (3.1)	16 (59.3)	11 (40.7)	16 (59.3)	75
Psychotic disorders:	112 (12.9)	54 (48.2)	58 (51.8)	69 (61.6)	54
Affective disorders	-	-	-	-	-
- Depression:	385 (44.4)	269 (69.9)	116 (30.1)	252 (65.5)	60
- Bipolar disorders:	6 (0.7)	4 (66.7)	2 (33.3)	4 (66.7)	47
- Rest disorders:	38 (4.4)	27 (71.1)	11 (28.9)	29 (76.3)	50
Anxiety disorders:	96 (11.1)	63 (65.6)	33 (34.4)	62 (64.6)	59
Somatiform disorders:	141 (16.3)	93 (66)	48 (34)	89 (63.1)	67
Sleep disorders:	59 (6.8)	39 (66.1)	20 (33.9)	31 (52.5)	68
Personality disorders:	3 (0.3)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)	1 (33.3)	42
Other disorders:	0 (0)	-	-	-	-
Total	867 (100)	567 (65.4)	300 (34.6)	553 (63.8)	60