

RISK OF EXCESSIVE BENZODIAZEPINE REDEEMING OVER TIME: A NATIONWIDE OBSERVATIONAL STUDY

Ingunn Fride Tvette¹, Trine Bjørner² and Tor Skomedal³

¹ The Norwegian Computing Center, Norway

² Department of General Practice/Family Medicine, Institute of Health and Society, University of Oslo, Norway

³ Department of Pharmacology, University of Oslo, Norway

Benzodiazepines (BZDs) are a type of medication known as tranquilizers that acts on the central nervous system and produce sedation and muscle relaxation and lower anxiety levels. It is widely prescribed for a variety of conditions, particularly anxiety and insomnia. National guidelines state that BZDs should only be used for a short period of time, and with concurrent use as much as 50 % can have discontinuation problems.

We have examined the risk for previous BZD-naïve individuals to become excessive BZD redeemers through a cox proportional hazard regression model. Data is obtained from the Norwegian drug prescription database and Statistics Norway. Risk factors are, together with gender and age, which BZD previously dispensed, prescriber's specialty, previous medication use as an indication of other relevant diseases, education, type of work and social benefits possibly received.

Keywords: Anxiety, Cox regression, Insomnia, Public health.

References:

- Bjørner T., Tvette I.F., Aursnes I., Skomedal T. (2013) Utlevering av benzodiazepiner og z-hypnotika fra norske apotek 2004-2011. *Tidsskr Nor Legeforen* nr. 20, 133: 2149 -2153.
- Tvette I.F., Bjørner T., Aursnes I.A., Skomedal T. A 3-year survey quantifying the risk of dose escalation of benzodiazepines and congeners to identify risk factors to aid doctors to more rationale prescribing. (2013) *BMJ Open* 3:e003296. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2013- 003296.