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### **Monitoring benzodiazepine use in mental health psychiatry outpatient clinics: A project from KSA**

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**Background:** Benzodiazepines (BZD) are recognized as one of the most widely prescribed medications in the world, the delicate balance between using & misusing are always a concern for the physicians.

**Objective:** To minimize the risk of Benzodiazepine misuse in the psychiatry outpatient clinics of single tertiary care center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**Methods:** This prospective project was conducted in the outpatient setting of mental health department at King Faial Specialist Hospital & Research Centre, Riyadh; targeting 49 patients who are following in one clinic out of five modules & taking benzodiazepine medications as shown in their records. The subjects were followed & their pattern of benzodiazepine use is surveilled from January to March 2015. All data were collected from patient visit and medication refill visit, unscheduled visit and emergency visit, and violent behavior at work place. In addition to basic demographic information and, duration, frequency of prescription of benzodiazepine use, as well as the reason it was noted. For those who are using benzodiazepine regularly as instructed by their physician with no suspicion of misuse they were given follow up appointments as usual, but for those whom suspected to misuse as seen in their previous records, a strict & well monitored schedule was assigned for them to minimize the risk of abuse.

**Results:** Out of 49 patients involved in the project (32 male and 17 female), 24 patients are using the benzodiazepine regularly as instructed by physician while 25 patients are likely abusers as found by their frequent refill & ER visits The most common abused medication was clonazepam, duration of abuse range from 1 to 30 years.

**Conclusion:** Overall, this project proves to mental health department, the possibility to monitor the controlled medications in effective way, assuring the safety for the patients & reduce the load of unscheduled patients who come for narcotics refill. The project will be adopted to include all psychiatric outpatient clinics in the hospital in the next phase.

#### **Biography**

Eltoum Etdal Abdelrahman is currently working as a Psychiatry Nurse Coordinator in Mental Health Department of King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre, Saudi Arabia. She has worked in various medical clinics and attends special courses in mental health department.

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