TOWARDS A MORE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE USE OF PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS IN NURSING HOMES: A QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT IN BELGIUM

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BACKGROUND

• The prevalence of psychotropic drug use in Belgian nursing homes is very high (79%)
• The use is in more than 90% of the residents chronic
• One third of the Belgian nursing home residents use multiple psychotropic drugs

The Belgian government has defined the reduction of psychotropic drugs in nursing homes as a national priority and has funded quality improvement projects that tackle the injudicious use of psychotropic drugs.

METHODS

• A pilot project (2013-2014) with a pre-post design in 2 nursing homes
• The intervention group received an educational trilogy given by experts on psychotropic drugs, as well as one-on-one professional support
• The professional support was provided by 2 project staff members
• The control group received education-only without professional support afterwards
• Drug use was recorded and coded according to the Anatomical Therapeutic and Chemical classification.
• Included psychotropics were antipsychotics, antidepressants and benzodiazepines
• Measurements were done at 3 time-points: at baseline (pre), after 10 months (post) and after 1 year (follow-up)

RESULTS

Box 1. Description of the population (n=119)

- Mean age of residents (n=119) was 81 (range 56-96), and 71% were females
- Dementia was the main clinical diagnosis (35%).
- Residents had a high physical dependency with a mean ADL score of 17
- Mean medication use at baseline was 9 (range 1-21)

Figure 1. Prevalence and distribution of the psychotropic drug use before and after the intervention (n=119)

Prevalentie PRE=72.3%
Prevalentie POST=60.5%

Figure 2. Psychotropic drug use at baseline, post-intervention and after 1 year.

Figure 3. Comparison of psychotropic drug use between intervention and control group

CONCLUSION

This improvement project led to a significant decrease in the use of psychotropic drugs, even after 1 year follow-up. Education-only had a very limited effect. The person-centered approach offered by the project staff was of a great value.

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