Anticholinergic Burden in People with Intellectual Disability

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Background:

• Anti-Cholinergic Burden (ACB) is one of the adverse outcomes of psychotropic medication, which is poorly studied in people with intellectual disability (ID).

Anticholinergic side-effects:



• ACB can cause increased mortality and morbidity.

Aims and hypothesis:

• To measure ACB for adults with ID and co-existing mental health conditions and make practice recommendations.

Method:

- The project was carried out over a period of 3 months on 19 patients with ID admitted to two specialist psychiatry units in England.
- Scales Used: ACB (ACB calculator, Anticholinergic Effect on Cognition-AEC), clinical outcome (Clinical Global Impression- CGI) and other side effects of prescribed medication (Liverpool University Neuroleptic Sideeffect Rating Scale- LUNSERS, Glasgow Antipsychotic Side-effect Scale- GASS)
- Anonymized data was analyzed using quantitative methods.
- The results were presented in two psychiatry peer group meetings of prescribers, one psychiatry continuing professional development programme and three multidisciplinary governance groups.
- Practice recommendations were finalized based on feedback from these six forums.

Results:

- Mean ACB calculator score was 6.68 and 4.21 on the AEC scale.
- On LUNSERS, the mean score was 23.13 (medium side-effects), on GASS 8.87 (mild or absent side-effects), on CGI efficacy index 6

Practice recommendations:

1. The indication(s) and rationale for prescribing all psychotropic medications, should be clearly stated.

(decided clinical improvement with side-effects not significantly interfering with functioning) and on CGI global improvement 2.37 (much improved).



- 2. Consent-to-treatment procedures or bestinterests decision-making processes should be followed and documented.
- 3. The ACB of the patient's medication regime should be calculated using an instrument- ACB calculator, AEC scale or equivalent.
- 4. Use standardised scales like- LUNSERS, GASS, CGI Efficacy Index, CGI Global Improvement to monitor side-effects and treatment outcome.
- 5. These scales do not include all potential anticholinergic side effects. An Anticholinergic Quick Checklist (ACQC) is proposed.

Discussion:

- The ACB in people with learning disability and mental health problems is high.
- While an ACB calculator score of 3+ is described as associated with increased mortality and morbidity in the general population, the mean score in this sample was double that if prescribed prn medication was included.
- Despite the high ACB, they show good clinical improvement and functioning regarding their mental health.
- 6. Regular monitoring of treatment repose to psychotropics.
- 7. Regular evaluation of the need to continue or discontinue psychotropic medication.



