

Article: 0743

Topic: EPW28 - e-Poster Walk Session 28: Epidemiology and Social Psychiatry

State of Agitation in Europe (Stage): Preliminary Results in Spain and Portugal

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Background: Although agitation is a nonspecific term applied to an array of syndromes and behaviors, is a common syndrome in patients with schizophrenia (SCH) and bipolar disorder (BD). In Europe the estimation of prevalence of 'agitation' has been difficult due to the lack of standard studies or systematic data collection about this syndrome, except for few transversal studies.

Objectives: To assess the prevalence of agitation in patients with SCH or BP in different European Countries and to describe its characteristics. We present the preliminary results obtained in centers from Spain and Portugal.

Design: Epidemiological, observational, cross-sectional, multicenter and international study.

Method: During 1 week were registered the number of episodes of acute agitation attended at the participating centers in the psychiatric ER or Acute Inpatient Unit that met the inclusion criteria. Demographic characteristics, the underline disease, assessment and the management of the episode were also described.

Results: Were report 95 cases of agitation that could be included in the data base, with an overall prevalence of 3.2 %, specifically 6.5% in Emergency Room and of 2.0 % in the Acute Psychiatric Inpatient Unit. The management of the episodes included from non-invasive to more coercive measures as mechanical, physical constraint or isolation, unavoidable in half of the patients (51.6%).

Conclusions: Despite the limitations of this study, the results are matching with the few data reported in the literature and reaffirm that agitation, even though not yet well recognized and defined, can be considered an important challenge in this type of patients.