Antidepressant Use Among Commercially Insured Adults from 2009 to 2016

Aaron Bloschichak, MPH, Anna Milewski, BA, William C. Johnson, PhD

Background

Motivation
• Previous survey research suggests that antidepressant use has been increasing over the last two decades
• A 2017 NCHS Data Brief showed antidepressant use increased from 7.7% to 12.7% from 1999 to 2014

Research Question:
• Do we observe an increase in antidepressant use?
• If we do, how has antidepressant use increased?

Methods

Data Source:
• Claims data from the Health Care Cost Institute commercial claims data base from 2009 to 2016

Sample:
• Individuals, ages 0 to 64 with a full year of employer coverage from 2009 to 2016 diagnosed with a mood disorder using clinical classification software designation (level 2 category of 5.8)
• Repeated cross section of between 550,000 to 710,000 enrollees in each year from 2009 to 2016

AHFS Classes
• SSRI: selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors; prevent the reabsorption of serotonin by neurons in the brain
• SNRI: serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors; prevent reabsorption of serotonin and norepinephrine by neurons in the brain
• Antidepressants, Miscellaneous: includes active ingredients that don’t fit neatly into traditional antidepressant classes

Results

• Antidepressant use increased 58 days’ supplied from 165 days in 2009 to 223 days in 2016.

• Across age groups, men and women had similar increases in antidepressant use

• Out of the Three Most Common AHFS Classes, Two Showed Substantial Increase in Use Over Time
• Antidepressants, Miscellaneous saw a 98 percent increase in days’ supply per member while SSRIs saw a 32 percent increase in days’ supply per member.

• Certain Active Ingredients Accounted for the Majority of the Increase in Days’ Supplied
• Five active ingredients accounted for 93 percent of the increase in antidepressant use from 2009 to 2016
• SSRI and Antidepressants, Miscellaneous accounted for the majority of the increase in days’ supplied

Active Ingredient | AHFS Class | Days’ Supplied 2009 | Days’ Supplied 2016 | Share of the Increase
Bupropion Hydrochloride | Antidepressants, Misc. | 19 | 40 | 36%
Fluoxetine Hydrochloride | SSRI | 14 | 25 | 18%
Sertraline Hydrochloride | SSRI | 24 | 34 | 17%
Escitalopram Oxalate | SSRI | 28 | 30 | 12%
Trazodone Hydrochloride | Other (MAOI) | 10 | 14 | 8%
All Other (25) | | 76 | 80 | 8%
Total | | 166 | 223 | 100%

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