Age-related pharmacotherapy of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder in Slovenia in children and adolescents: A population-based study.

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Abstract

BACKGROUND:
There are no data on age-related pharmacotherapy for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) medication in children and adolescents in the most European countries. The main aim of this paper was to obtain that data for children and adolescents in Slovenia.

METHOD:
The number of ADHD drug prescriptions per patient was obtained from the health claims data on prescription drugs of the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia for the study period (2003-2015). Three age groups were analyzed: 2-5 years, 6-12 years, and 13-17 years. Only immediate-release methylphenidate (IR-MPH), methylphenidate-osmotic release oral delivery system (OROS-MPH), and atomoxetine (ATX) were available and included in this study.

RESULTS:
Less than 50% of patients in Slovenia were treated with medication. The number of patients treated with MPH in the 6-12 age group remained approximately the same between 2007 and 2015 (604-729 patients). In the 13-17 age group, however, that number increased 2-fold between 2003 and 2015, from 288 to 555. The number of patients treated with ATX in the 6-12 age group age group increased from 20 to 163 between 2007 and 2015. The number was similar in the 13-17 age group, increasing from 10 to 165 in the same period. In 2015, 21% of the patients from all age groups in this study were treated with ATX.

CONCLUSIONS:
The number of patients treated for ADHD increased rapidly in all age groups. Patients under the age of six are prescribed medication in Slovenia, which should be avoided.