

Presentation Category	
First choice	Treatment / Recovery
Second choice	Psychiatric Comorbidity

**Title:** USE OF PHARMACOLOGICAL TREATMENTS BY A SAMPLE OF ITALIAN PATIENTS AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS

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**Background:** It has often been reported that the majority of patients affected by Alcohol Use Disorders (AUDs) do not receive any pharmacological treatment. This study was aimed at investigating the use of the medications available in Italy (disulfiram, naltrexone, acamprosate, and  $\gamma$ -hydroxybutyric acid) by a sample of outpatients affected by AUDs.

**Methods:** Four trained psychologists interviewed outpatients affected by AUDs in an area of Sardinia, Italy, of approximately 550.000 adult inhabitants.

**Results:** A total sample of 208 outpatients affected by AUDs was interviewed (~1/3 of total outpatients affected by AUDs of that area). Their main features were: 166 males (79.5%); mean age=48.6 $\pm$ 0.6 year; duration of AUDs=15.8 $\pm$ 0.7 years; number of drinks per drinking days=19.4 $\pm$ 1.3; number of criteria of DSM-IV-Tr=5.8 $\pm$ 0.1. Before the admission into specific services, 13 patients (6.2%) had already received medication for AUDs; 7 patients (3.4%) had received disulfiram and 6 patients (2.9%)  $\gamma$ -hydroxybutyric acid. Over the same period, 22 patients (10.6%) had already attended self-help groups and 4 patients (1.9%) had received thiamine (Vitamine B1). After the admission into specific medical settings for the treatment of AUDs, 113 patients (54.3%) received medication for AUDs: 58 patients (27.9%) received disulfiram, 65 patients (31.2%)  $\gamma$ -hydroxybutyric acid, 2 patients (1.0%) naltrexone, and 6 patients (2.9%) acamprosate. In the same period, 54 patients (26.0%) frequented self-help associations, and 21 patients (10.1%) received thiamine.

**Conclusions:** The results of this study confirm that the number of patients who receive a treatment for AUDs continues to be surprisingly low. Despite the long duration and the high level of severity of the AUDs, the majority of patients affected by AUDs did not receive any treatment before their admission in specific medical settings for the treatment of AUDs (10% of patients frequented self-help groups, 6% received a medication for AUDs, and 2% thiamine). After the admission into specific medical settings, the number of patients who received a treatment increased: 26% frequented self-help associations, 54% received a specific medication, and 10% received thiamine. However, approximately half of the patients did not receive any pharmacological treatment even if they frequented medical settings for the treatment of AUDs. Additional work is needed to understand the reasons of such a scarce use of treatments.

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