

## **ABSTRACT: Psychotropics Prescription in Primary Care**

### **Background**

The study aimed to measure the prevalence of psychotropic prescriptions in primary care at four UTRGV clinical sites. Based on the results, this paper serves to inform and educate primary care providers of their current practices and treatment options when diagnosing mental health disorders and prescribing psychotropics.

### **Methods**

This study used EMR data from January to March 2021 in four primary care clinics affiliated with the UT Health RGV system. Primary care patients from January to March 2021 and who were diagnosed with mood disorders (including Depression, Anxiety, and Bipolar Disorder) were included in this quality improvement study.

### **Results**

A total of 1,436 patients were seen between January and March 2021 and of those, there were 361 patients who received a mood disorder diagnosis (25% prevalence). Of all the patients diagnosed with a mood disorder, 97% presented with one mental health diagnosis and 3% with two mood disorders. Regarding comorbidity, 70% of patients diagnosed with a mood disorder were also seeking care for chronic and acute health conditions. Regarding the types of mood disorders diagnosed, 54% of mood disorder diagnoses were anxiety-related, 40% were depression-related diagnoses, and 3% were Bipolar Disorder. Of all patients diagnosed with a mood disorder 17% were prescribed medication for mental health symptoms.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, this study found that 1 in 4 patients that visit primary care at UTRGV clinics are diagnosed with a mental health disorder. Of these, 17% received a psychotropic prescription, indicating many patients without medications may first benefit from brief behavioral health interventions before psychopharmacological treatment. The current study highlights how integrated care meets the behavioral health care needs for most patients with mood disorders seeking primary care.