



European Journal of Case Reports in Internal Medicine

Addressing Inpatient Admissions and Readmissions Due to Adverse Drug Reactions in the Oldest Old

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Doi: 10.12890/2015_S1SP08 - European Journal of Case Reports in Internal Medicine - © EFIM 2015

Received: 12/08/2015

Accepted: 19/09/2015

Published: 24/09/2015

How to cite this article: Corbella X. Addressing inpatient admissions and readmissions due to adverse drug reactions in the oldest old. *EJCRIM* 2015;2:DOI:10.12890/2015_S1SP08

Conflicts of Interests: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in this research.

Acknowledgements: This abstract has been presented as a lecture at 2nd International Seminar REPOSI: Targeting the burden of polypharmacy in the elderly.

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Adverse drugs reactions (ADRs) in the older population are a major healthcare problem resulting in significant morbidity, healthcare consumption and high costs. In accordance, all ADR-related admissions of patients aged ≥ 65 years are prospectively identified through a systematic daily review of admission diagnosis of all patients urgently hospitalized at the Bellvitge University Hospital, a tertiary care public institution in Barcelona, Spain. Furthermore, we undertook a cross-sectional study through the database of the Pharmacovigilance Program for assessing the prevalence and mortality rates of urgent hospitalization due to ADRs in patients aged ≥ 65 years. From 2008 to 2014, ADRs were suspected to be the main reason for urgent admission in 1,976 out of 60,263 patients aged ≥ 65 years (prevalence of ADR-related hospitalization: 3.3% [95% CI 3.1-3.4%]). The crude in-hospital mortality rate was 10.2% in patients with ADR-related admission and 9% in patients admitted for other causes ($p=0.077$). Most patients (86%) were exposed to polypharmacy and a drug-drug interaction was suspected in 49% of cases. The most frequent drug-reaction associations were acute renal failure related to renin-angiotensin system (RAS) inhibitors, gastrointestinal bleeding caused by antithrombotics and/or non-steroidal anti-inflammatories, and intracranial bleeding induced by vitamin K antagonists.