the National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NHAMCS) data from 1993 through 2004. Both are national probability surveys of visits to office-based physicians and ambulatory services in hospital emergency and outpatient departments and provide weights to obtain nationally representative estimates. Seventy-six different medicines of herbal origin were identified based on their generic codes and the visits in which they were prescribed were calculated for each year. RESULTS: In 1993, of the total 1.6 billion NAMCS & NHAMCS visits, herbal medication was prescribed in 0.14% ambulatory visits [2,328,901 (95% C.I.: 2,298,097–2,359,705)]. This proportion increased to 0.26% in 2004 or 2,883,006 visits (95% C.I.: 2,821,529–2,944,483) of the total 1.1 billion visits. The five most commonly prescribed medications were Psyllium, Senna, Garlic, Ginkgo, and Ipecac. Forty-nine of the total seventy-six study drugs were never prescribed during a physician visit throughout the study period. CONCLUSION: The trend of prescribing of herbal medications during office-based physician visits has risen over the past decade but is limited to selected herbal products and is not widespread.

**PHP14**

**POLYPHARMACY IN ELDERLY PATIENTS AT THE MEXICAN INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SECURITY: SATISFACTION AND COSTS**

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OBJECTIVES: To identify cases of polypharmacy (PF) and to describe their social and clinical characteristics, satisfaction and costs in elderly patients who attended Family Medicine health care services at the Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS).

METHODS: Cross sectional study in 260 elders (>65 years old) who attended a Family Medicine facility at the IMSS in Mexico City. A survey and a concurrent review of medical records were performed to identify characteristics of drug prescription and patients’ satisfaction in the previous 3 months. The WHO definition of polypharmacy was used to classify this prescribing pattern: simultaneously consumption of more than 3 drugs. Costs were estimated from an institutional perspective and are expressed in US dollars (USD). RESULTS: Mean age was 71 years (6.9 SD), 60.8% were female, 15.8% illiterate, 33.5% married, 10.4% single, and 35.4% widow/widower. A high percentage (86.2%) reported having a chronic disease; the main problems were hypertension (57.7%), diabetes (35.4%), and sleep problems (35.4%). Satisfaction with medication was: very satisfied (86.2%), satisfied (13.1%), and dissatisfied (0.6%) with a mean 6.6 USD (per month) with a 0.8% satisfaction. Most commonly prescribed medications were Psyllium, Senna, Garlic, Ginkgo, and Ipecac. Forty-nine of the total seventy-six study drugs were never prescribed during a physician visit throughout the study period. CONCLUSION: The trend of prescribing of herbal medications during office-based physician visits has risen over the past decade but is limited to selected herbal products and is not widespread.