

Trend Watch



Current Status of Hypnotic Prescribing Habits in the United States

by Elisa F. Cascade; Amir H. Kalali, MD; and John Reites

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ABSTRACT: Prescription data suggests that outside of primary care physicians, psychiatrists represent the second largest prescriber of sleep

aids, accounting for 11 percent of total prescriptions. Use of individual agents do not differ between psychiatrists, primary care physicians, and neurologists.

KEY WORDS: sleep aid, hypnotic, neurologist, psychiatrist, primary care physician, prescriptions

INTRODUCTION

In this article, we examine use of specific sleep aids by psychiatrists, primary care physicians, and neurologists to determine if there are similarities or differences in sleep aid use.

METHODS

To investigate the use of sleep aids by prescriber specialty, we took a snapshot of prescription data from Verispan's Vector One National (VONA) database in July 2007. At present, Verispan's VONA captures nearly half of all prescription activity in the US.

RESULTS

As seen in Figure 1, primary care physicians represent over half of all prescriptions for sleep aids in the US. Outside of primary care physicians, psychiatrists represent the second largest prescriber specialty with 11 percent of prescriptions. Perhaps what is most interesting about this data is that neurologists, who are often referred to as sleep specialists, represent only two percent of the prescriptions.

The data in Figure 2 summarize use of specific sleep aids in primary care physicians, psychiatrists, and neurologists. As seen in Figure 2, individual sleep aid use did not differ significantly between specialties. ●

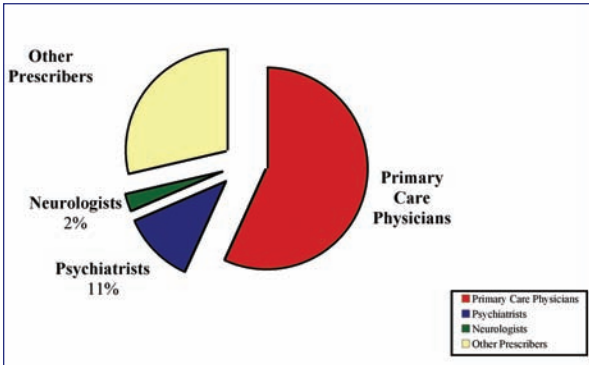


FIGURE 1. Sleep aid total prescriptions, by specialty

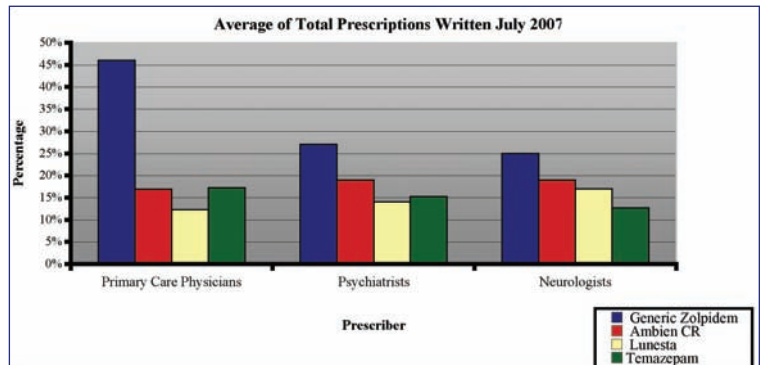


FIGURE 2. Product share of total prescriptions, by specialty

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