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P01.058 PSYCHOTROPIC PRESCRIPTION PATTERNS: WHAT DO THEY TELL US ABOUT STANDARDS OF CARE IN BIPOLAR DISORDER?

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Statement of the Study: A range of guidelines derived from the current evidence base is available, suggesting pharmacological algorithms for bipolar disorder. Prescription patterns offer a real worldview into the extent to which these are followed in clinical situations.

Methods: In this study, prescription pattern data from 3 academic community based health services in Melbourne were examined. The sample included only outpatient prescription data.

Summary of Results: The total sample size was 465. The majority of people with Bipolar Disorder were not prescribed mood stabilizers. Only 31% of the sample was on lithium, and 20% on valproate and carbamazepine. In contrast, there were high rates of antipsychotic prescription rates, with 27% on first generation antipsychotics (FGA) and 19% on second generation antipsychotics (SGA). Antidepressant prescription rates were also high, with 33% on antidepressants. Of note is the fact that only 39% of subjects given an antidepressant were co-prescribed mood stabilizers. Benzodiazepines were given to 21% of the sample.

Conclusion: These data suggest that for a large proportion of patients in tertiary care, medication use deviated substantially from recommended patterns of use. This raises concern for the overall standard of care in bipolar disorder, and suggests that increasing awareness and continuing education in bipolar disorder should be a priority.