ANTIPSYCHOTIC PRESCRIBING PATTERNS IN AUSTRALIA: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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April 05, 2024

Abstract

Objectives: To examine real-world patterns of antipsychotic use in Australia. Methods: This retrospective cohort analysis was conducted using the Australian Commonwealth Department of Human Services Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) 10% sample data. Included data were for patients aged 16-years or older who initiated treatment for the first time with a PBS-reimbursed antipsychotic medication for schizophrenia between July 2013 and September 2017. Patterns of treatment usage were summarised descriptively. Differences in prescribing patterns by age and prescribing year were reported. Treatment persistence was estimated using Kaplan-Meier methods, with differences explored using log-rank tests. Values of $p < 0.05$ were considered statistically significant. Results: 6,740 patients, representing 8,249 non-unique patients, received prescriptions for antipsychotic medications. Patients were aged 16 years to over 85 years (54.5% were < 55 years) and two-thirds of patients were male (61%). The majority (62%, n=5139/8249) were prescribed an atypical oral antipsychotic. Typical long-acting antipsychotic therapies (LATs) were prescribed 19% of the time (n=1,608/8,249. There was a small increase in prescribing of atypical LAT and typical LAT and a small decrease in atypical oral and clozapine prescribing over the study period. Treatment persistence was greatest in patients treated with clozapine, than in those treated with atypical LATs. Conclusions: While the majority of patients receive atypical antipsychotic medications, one in five continue to user older typical LAT therapies. Patient age and time on therapy may be associated with choice of therapy. Persistence to atypical LAT therapy is better than for other treatment modalities in this real-world cohort.

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(A) Prescribing patterns by year

(B) Prescribing patterns by age

Legend:
- – – – Clozapine
- ······ Typical Oral
- – – – Typical LAI
- —— Atypical Oral
- —— Atypical LAI
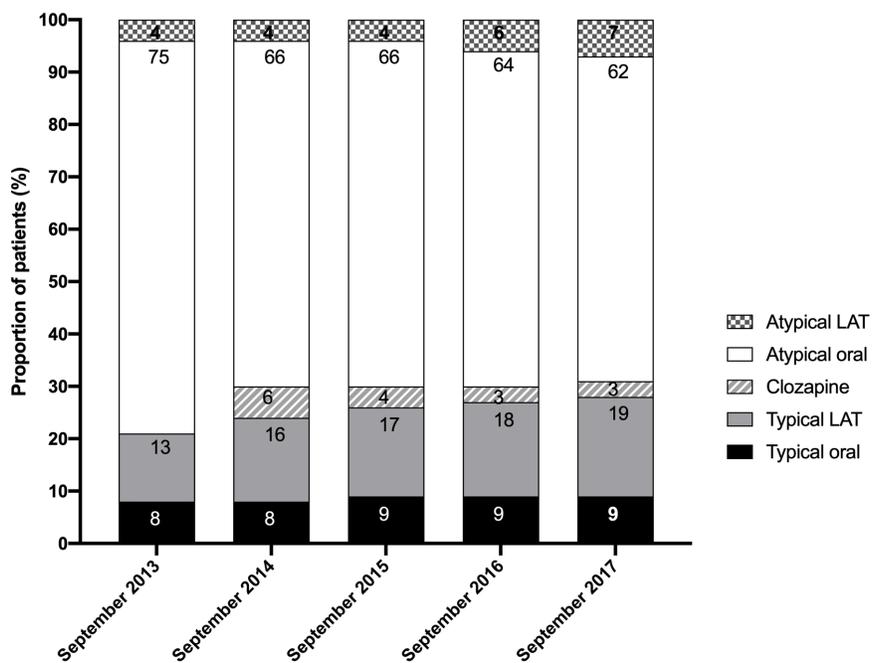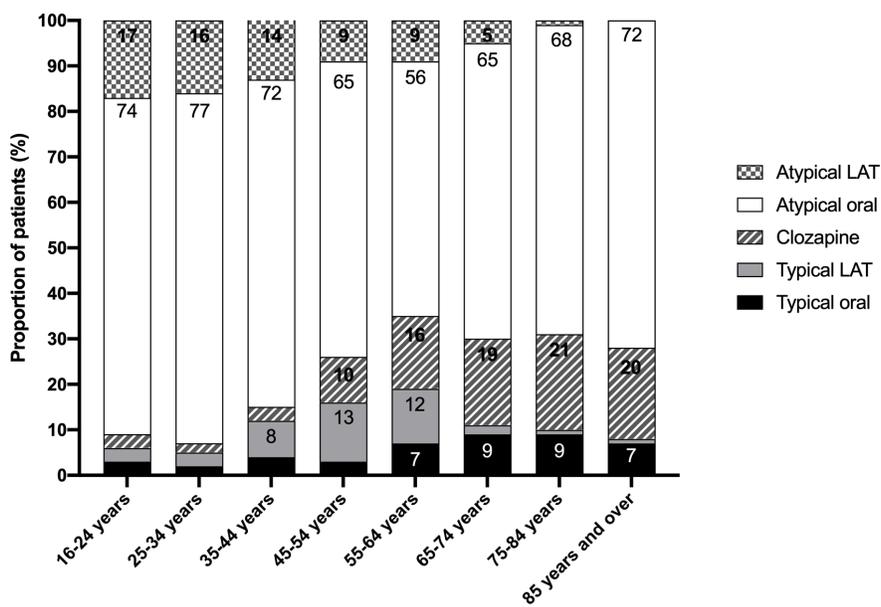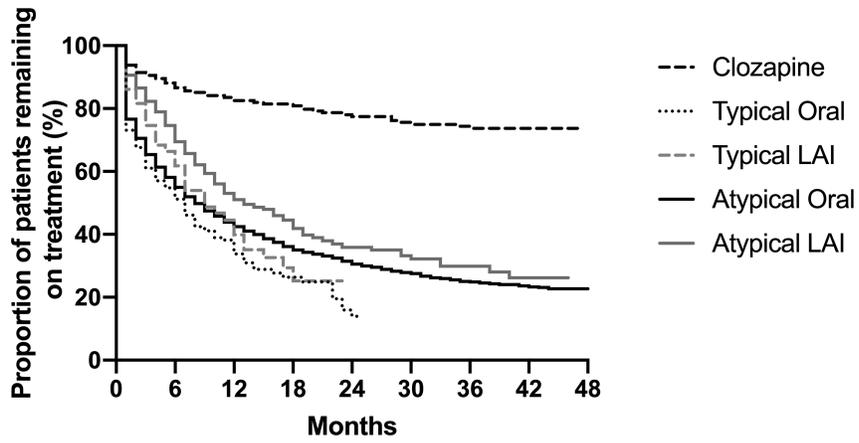
Risk Table	0	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48
Clozapine	224	173	156	146	128	116	110	98	≤ 3
Typical Oral	814	91	35	17	7	≤ 3			
Typical LAI	1653	47	17	5	≤ 3	≤ 3	≤ 3	≤ 3	≤ 3
Atypical Oral	6513	2549	1491	926	596	394	233	133	46
Atypical LAI	610	311	171	101	53	31	17	10	≤ 3

Note: patients may enter the analysis more than once, so the number at risk reflects the number of prescriptions, not individual patients

Treatment switching in discontinued patients
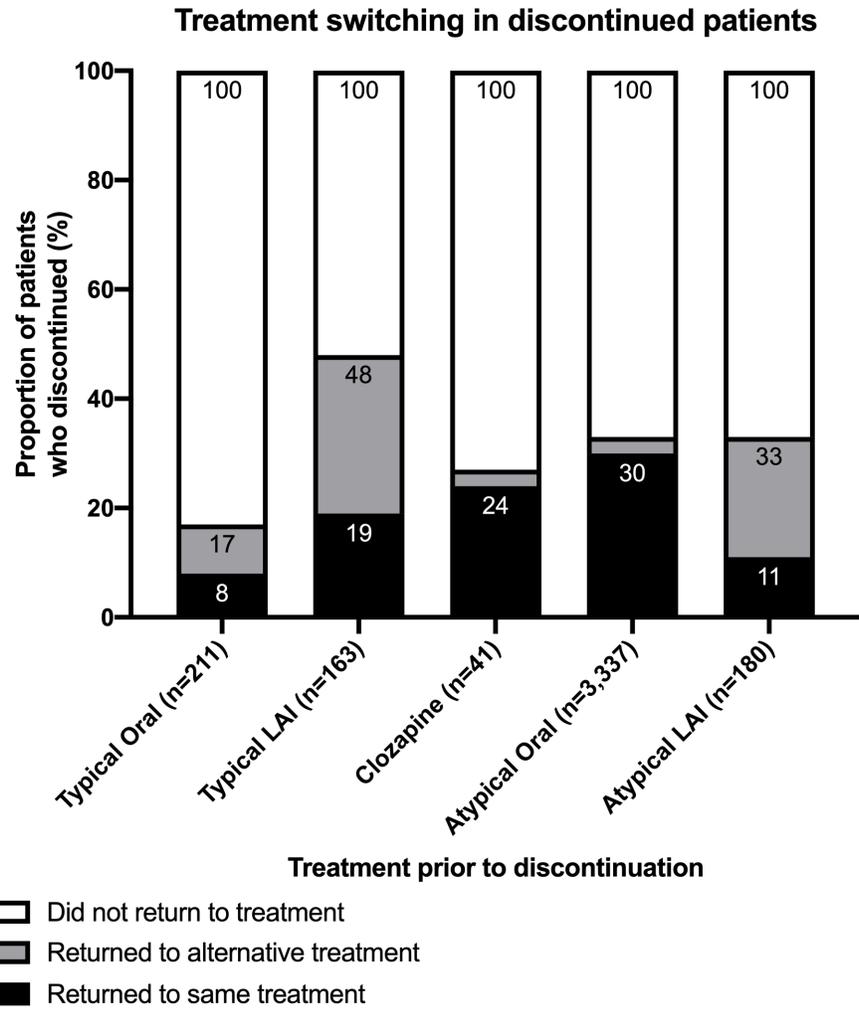
Note: Percentages on the figure are cumulative percentages.