

REIMBURSED DRUG UTILIZATION FOR CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE TREATMENT IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Effective outpatient management of this disease requires prescription of and adherence to appropriate pharmacological therapies. The most common medications for treating COPD are bronchodilators and steroids. These drugs are reimbursed in Albania and this retrospective study evaluates their utilization in COPD outpatient care in 2011. Data on drugs for COPD treatment were obtained from Health Insurance Institute database. Drug consumption was presented in DDD/1000 inhabitants/day (DID) using international Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC)/ Defined Daily Dose (DDD) methodology. Total number of COPD outpatients, who had taken at least one reimbursed prescription, was used as the denominator. In 2011 total consumption of reimbursed bronchodilators used in COPD was 731.54 DID. The most prescribed bronchodilator classes were: β_2 -agonists with 445.38 DID and methylxanthines with 285.76 DID. The most used bronchodilator drugs were: salbutamol, aminophylline and theophylline with 42%, 25% and 14% respectively consumption in one year. Long-acting β_2 -agonists were mostly used in combination with inhaled corticosteroids and their combinations represented 13.5% of total bronchodilator consumption. Corticosteroids had an annual consumption of 86.8 DID, inhaled preparations represented 87% of their use and beclomethasone was the most used steroid with 68.3 DID. In conclusion, in 2011 bronchodilators had been the mainstay of treatment for insured Albanian outpatients with COPD and inhaled β_2 -agonists and methylxanthines were the most prescribed drugs. According to the guidelines, methylxanthines can be used only if the therapy with inhaled long-acting bronchodilators is unavailable or unaffordable because of their serious side effects. So current guideline recommendations about drug prescription in COPD should be taken more in consideration.

Keywords: *utilization of drugs, ATC/DDD methodology, bronchodilators, corticosteroids*