

Antipsychotic polypharmacy can be rationalised successfully within an acute setting

Rationalising antipsychotics polypharmacy in an inpatient mental health unit

Alice Wisdom¹, Susan Loeser¹

¹: SA Pharmacy, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network

Introduction

- Whilst no robust evidence exists supporting the use of multiple antipsychotics, polypharmacy remains prevalent
- Antipsychotic polypharmacy increases the side effect burden, regimen complexity, drug interactions and tolerability within a population with existing vulnerabilities to non-adherence and poorer health outcomes

Aims

- To assess the incidence of antipsychotic polypharmacy prescribing within an inpatient setting

Method

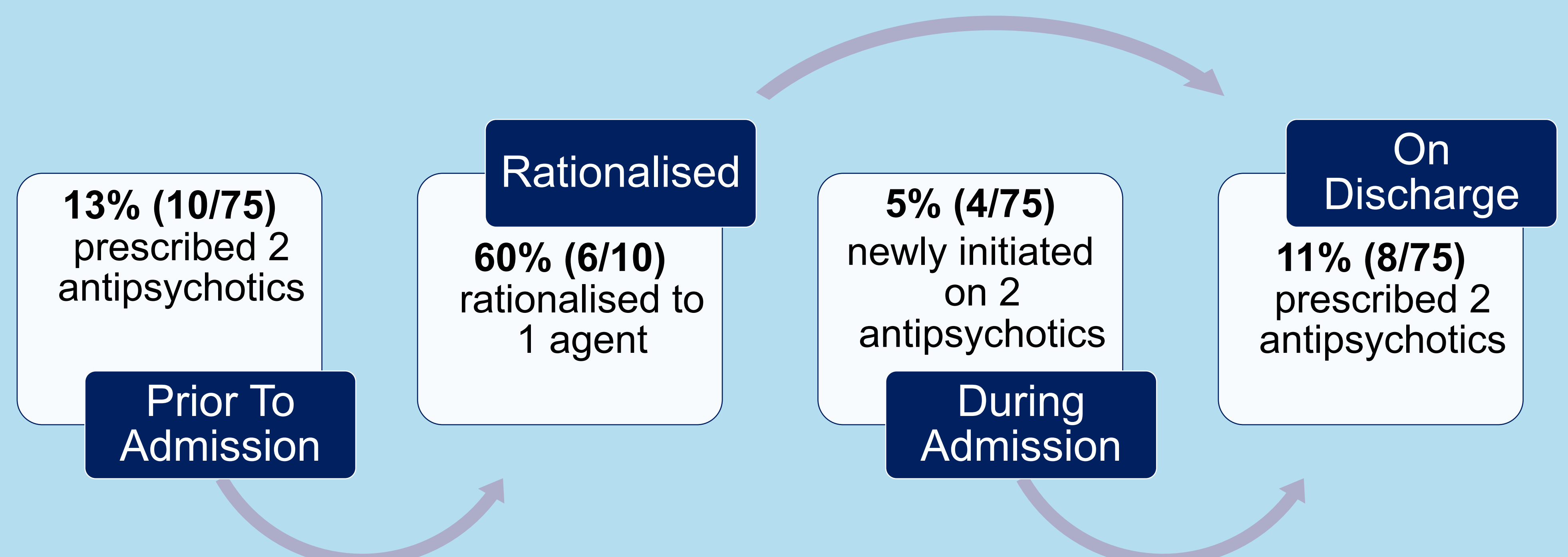
- Observational study September and November 2020
- Lyell McEwin Hospital, South Australia
- All patients prescribed ≥ 1 antipsychotic at the time of discharge

Antipsychotic polypharmacy

The use of more than 1 antipsychotic assessed prior to admission, during admission and on discharge

Results

- **75 patients** were prescribed a regular antipsychotic at the time of discharge



- Of the 8 patients discharged on multiple antipsychotics, **88%** had a documented indication and/ or plan for discontinuation
- PRN antipsychotic use contributed to short term antipsychotic polypharmacy in **65%** of inpatients

Discussion

- Overall incidence of antipsychotic polypharmacy was low, and documentation of ongoing plans were commonplace
- High rates of treatment optimisation in patients with existing antipsychotic polypharmacy demonstrates rationalisation can occur in an acute inpatient setting
- The contribution of PRN antipsychotics to polypharmacy during inpatient stay was high and often overlooked

Conclusion

- Clinical pharmacists are well placed in an inpatient unit to provide advice around antipsychotic polypharmacy and help to facilitate safe treatment optimisation

Acknowledgements

- Lorina Fakeye – Contribution as a 4th year UniSA Pharmacy student

For more information

Alice Wisdom
Senior Pharmacist Mental Health and Research
Alice.Wisdom@sa.gov.au



<https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alice-Wisdom>



Government of South Australia
SA Health
SA Pharmacy