

R051: Antipsychotic and antidepressant use among people with dementia in Northern Ireland: A retrospective analysis - QUB

Dementia is one of the greatest global challenges for health and social care in the 21st Century. Globally, about 47 million people are currently living with a dementia diagnosis. In Northern Ireland, it is estimated that 19,000 people are currently living with dementia. Dementia is a term used to describe a broad group of conditions that affect the brain and causes a progressive cognitive decline in the ability to think, learn and remember. At present there is no cure for dementia, nor a way to slow down its progress. The occurrence of dementia, together with the major health and social care burden associated with it, is predicted to increase considerably with our ageing population.

Much research has drawn attention to the medication that people with dementia are being prescribed. For instance, research has shown that people with dementia (PwD) are likely to be taking more medications than people without dementia. More specifically, research has called into question the efficacy and dangers that different types of drugs may pose to PwD. Two classes of drugs which have been called into question are antipsychotics and antidepressants. Sustained use of antidepressants and antipsychotics among PwD has been shown to significantly increase the risk of death for PwD in comparison to people without dementia. There is a clear need to assess the rate of prescription of antipsychotics and antidepressants to PwD in Northern Ireland and whether this affects mortality rates.

Primary objective: To quantify prescription rates of antipsychotics and antidepressants among people with dementia in Northern Ireland.

Secondary objective: To determine whether antidepressants and antipsychotics influence mortality rates among people with dementia in Northern Ireland and what demographic factors (age, gender etc.) might influence the rate at which these drugs are prescribed.