

ADAPTATION OF STOPP-START CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY POTENTIALLY INAPPROPRIATE PRESCRIPTIONS IN THE ELDERLY IN ALBANIA

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Abstract

Aims: The objective of our study is to develop an adapted version of the STOPP-START criteria used in identifying potentially inappropriate prescribed drugs, for being an effective and valuable instrument in clinical practice in Albania and other Albanian-speaking countries.

Methods: The original STOPP-START criteria along with their adapted versions in other countries were taken into consideration. A first translation was performed independently by two authors from Albania and one from Kosovo. Discrepancies were resolved by discussion and a fourth person was also consulted to reach a consensus. Afterwards, a check regarding drugs available in Albania and Kosovo was conducted to establish the final version.

Results: The final document in Albanian language included all 65 STOPP and 22 START criteria. To allow their spread and research in our language, we have compiled a detailed adapted version.

Conclusion: The challenge to mitigate potentially inappropriate prescriptions can be addressed only if there is a dissemination of the methods and tools to identify them among the medical community. This first attempt to adapt the criteria will be followed by their application in clinical practice, for research and preventive reasons, and their subsequent validation in our country.

Keywords: potentially inappropriate prescriptions, STOPP-START, Albania

Introduction

About 11.5% of the population in the Republic of Albania is aged over 65 years and it is estimated that this age group will increase in the coming years [1], along with the health problems associated with it. Treatment of multiple pathologies in the elderly is inevitably associated with the prescription of many drugs simultaneously (polypharmacy), which are often inappropriate and one of the main causes of adverse effects due to drugs [2-4]. Such effects related to the prescription of potentially inappropriate drugs in the elderly include hospitalization, death [5] and unnecessary increase of the cost of treatment [6]. It is considered as potentially inappropriate a prescription for which the risk of an adverse effect exceeds the clinical benefit, especially when there is evidence in favor of a more effective or safer alternative for the same condition, which is not cost-effective or which holds not enough scientific evidence to use. Recent studies highlight the high prevalence of inappropriate prescribing among older patients in different health settings (up to 70% of the patients) [7-9] but also their high preventability [10,11]. Several tools have been developed for the identification and prevention of these prescriptions [12].

STOPP-START (Screening Tool of Older People's potentially inappropriate Prescriptions-Screening Tool to Alert doctors to Right Treatment) belong to the explicit methods used for measuring the inappropriateness of drugs prescribed in the elderly [13,14]. They have been developed in Ireland by Gallagher et al. and are widely used in Europe [9,14].

Many studies have shown the supremacy of the STOPP-START criteria compared to other explicit methods (such as Beers, Priscus list) as a tool for