Abstract

The prescribed drug classes in most developed countries. The main aim of this study is to explore the pattern of use of anxiolytic and hypnotic drugs during the period 2000-2011, comparing their growth with that of five European countries. Method: We performed an ecological and descriptive study of anxiolytics and hypnotics consumption in Spain. Consumption data were obtained from the databases of medications dispensed in community pharmacies and charged through official prescriptions to the totality of the Spanish National Health System. Annual and total-period consumptions were expressed in defined daily doses (DDD) per 1000 inhabitants per day (DDD/1000 person/day) by each treatment subgroup, active substance and attending the plasma half-life of the medication. Approximate comparisons were also made with some European countries. Results: The use of anxiolytics and hypnotics drugs was 56.7 DDD/1000 person/day in 2000 and 82.9 DDD/1000 person/day in 2011 (a +46.1% increase across the period). Lorazepam and alprazolam were the most used anxiolytics (20.5 and 15.6 DDD/1000 person/day in 2011, respectively), whereas lor-metazepam was among the hypnotics (18.3 DDD/1000 person/day in 2011). In relative terms, hypnotics’ lormetazepam and zolpidem increased their use by 103.3% and 85.1%, respectively; while anxiolytics’ lorazepam and hydroxyzine increased 75.1% and 72.8%, respectively. In Spain (period 2003-2010), the total increase in the consumption of anxiolytics and hypnotics was +34.3%, with 24.0% for Portugal, 4.0% for Italy, but a reduction of -6.1% for France. Conclusions: A considerable increase in anxiolytics and hypnotics’ consumption has occurred in Spain during the last decade, being the growth higher than that reported in other European countries.

Keywords
Pharmacoepidemiology, Drug consumption, Drug utilization study, Anxiolytics, Hypnotics. Spain.