Abstract

Objectives: this study featured patients with affective bipolar disorder who were making use of lithium and received care at an outpatient care center located in a country town in the state of Sao Paulo in 2009; it assessed the adherence and knowledge of these patients in relation to the medication prescribed to them and verified the proportion of blood tests performed per year in the service, for each individual, to measure lithium levels in the blood. Method: descriptive study with quantitative approach, involving 36 participants. Structured interviews and review of medical records were used for data collection and descriptive statistics for data analysis. Results: difficulties in reporting the dosage of the medication prescribed and a high rate of non-adherence were identified among the participants. None of the participants in the study was submitted to two tests a year to measure lithium levels in the blood, which is the minimum proportion of tests recommended by the literature for maintenance treatment using lithium carbonate. Conclusion: this study highlights the critical factors for the promotion of patients’ safety in monitoring lithium drug therapy.

Keywords

Bipolar Disorder, Lithium Carbonate, Monitoring, Physiologic, Medication Adherence, Treatment Refusal.