

Initiatives to Increase Use of Clozapine at Bellevue

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Background

Bellevue has the highest rate of clozapine use among the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation facilities. Why?

- Population: highest number of clients with treatment-refractory mental illness, comorbidities and homelessness
- Initiatives to increase the use of clozapine

Education Initiatives

1. Physician Education

– Topics

- Indications
- Neuropharmacology
- Special Populations
- How to calm patient concerns and manage side effects
- Management of agranulocytosis

– Target Audience

- Attendings – Annual
- Residents – Periodically

2. Patient Education

Special Review

Special Review of adverse outcomes or sentinel events uses a standard list of review questions, which includes consideration of clozapine:

- Did the patient have a trial of clozapine?
- Why or why not?

Increased Scrutiny of Treatment for Patients with Refractory Illness

Clozapine always considered for:

- Clients referred for long-term care in state hospital
- Frequent readmissions (15 or 30 days)
- Clients on antipsychotic (AP) polypharmacy
- Special sub-populations

Special Sub-Populations

Evidence Supports Clozapine Use

- Psychosis with chronic suicidal ideation and/or violence
- Comorbid substance use disorder (SUD)
 - Relapse in SUD is lower with clozapine than other APs
- Asian population
 - Evidence that clozapine is more effective than other APs
 - Cultural stigma -> longer time to first treatment -> more likely to be treatment-refractory
- Psychogenic polydipsia (in context of psychosis)

Addressing Client Refusal

For clients who are good candidates for clozapine but refuse:

- May seek court order
 - Mandate Injectable APs until client agrees to clozapine
 - Some clients later expressed gratitude
 - AOT to continue as outpatients
- FazaClo: Rapidly dissolving clozapine for clients who may “cheek” their meds

Leadership Support

Department makes overt statements supporting use of clozapine

- It is evidence-based
- It is the “gold standard” for treatment-refractory schizophrenia
- It should be used in evidence-based manner
 - Not for first break
 - Not for non-refractory illness