Utilization of Benzodiazepines and Barbiturates after Medicare Part D Coverage
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INTRODUCTION

Benzodiazepines (BZD) and barbiturates (BARB) were excluded from Medicare Part D covered drugs from 2006 to 2012. Starting in 2013, the Part D program began to cover BARB, after the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced its indication for barbiturates in the treatment of epilepsy, cancer, and chronic health disorders.

The study objective was to examine the cost and use of these drugs in Medicare beneficiaries since most of these drugs are included by Beers’ criteria as potentially inappropriate drugs in older adults.

METHODS

Data Source from Chronic Condition Warehouse (CCW)

- 2013 Prescription Drug Event (PDE)
- 2013 Beneficiary Summary
- 2013 Prescription Drug Event (PDE)

Study Population

Beneficiaries who had 1 PDE in 2013 were included in the denominator. The numerator included those with one or more BARB or BZD PDEs.

Ascertainment of BARB or BZD

BARB and BZD were defined as having the following AHFS classification codes:

- Benzodiazepines (BZD)
- Barbiturates (Anticonvulsants)

- Included drugs that were previously covered by Medicare Part D (e.g., Paidenol and Butalbitol combination drugs for BARB and Chlordiazepoxide combination drugs for BZD)

- Final list of drugs included for BARB and BZD

Analysis

- Overall BARB and BZD PDE use and by:
  - Age group (≥65 vs. 65 and younger)
  - Gender
  - Low-income subsidy (LIS) status (based on positive low-income cost sharing subsidy amount)
- Primary pharmacy dispensing type (Retail, Long-Term Care [LTC], Other)
- Prescriber specialty
- Prevalence of BARB and BZD
- Total prescription cost of BARB and BZD

RESULTS

Table 1. Utilization and Total Prescription Cost for BARB and BZD among 2013 PDEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013 PDEs</th>
<th>BARB</th>
<th>BZD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All age</td>
<td>Number of PDEs</td>
<td>1,871,652,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total prescription cost (millions)</td>
<td>$183,725,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of users</td>
<td>36,199,293</td>
<td>78,273,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65 or older</td>
<td>Number of PDEs</td>
<td>1,048,646,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total prescription cost (millions)</td>
<td>$175,461,680</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of users</td>
<td>17,581,136</td>
<td>35,671,136</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 2. Barbiturate PDEs by Pharmacy

Figure 3. Characteristics of Benzodiazepines

Figure 4. Benzodiazepine by Drug

Figure 5. Prevalence of Benzodiazepine among BZD Users

Figure 6. Benzodiazepine by Pharmacy Dispensing Type and Prescriber Specialty

Figure 7. Prevalence of Benzodiazepine by Drug

REFERENCE


Funding source: Genentech/Milenium and Mailbox Services.

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