

Pharmacological Treatment of Mental Disorders and the Prevalence of Antipsychotic Drug Use at the Mental Health Center in Pristina

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Mental health is a vital component of overall well-being and having a sound mind is an invaluable asset. This study aimed to explore the conditions and therapy management at the Mental Health Center in Pristina by analyzing data from January to December 2022 and 2023. The research, conducted retrospectively with respect for patient confidentiality, examined the frequency of psychiatric disorders, treatment types, medications used, patient demographics, diagnoses, and side effects. In 2022, 155 patients (79 males, 76 females) were recorded, while in 2023, the number decreased to 110 patients (63 males, 47 females), with average patient age increasing from 32.42 to 38.42 years. Despite challenges in patient care, appropriate treatment plans significantly support health and social integration goals. The data indicate a reduction in psychiatric cases over the studied period, though the predominance of a relatively young age group raises concerns possibly linked to living conditions and lifestyle. These findings highlight the ongoing need for assessment and optimization of mental health therapies.

Keywords: Medications; Mental health; Patient management; Prevalence; Psychiatric disorders; Therapy.

Mental health refers to an individual's overall psychological and emotional resilience, encompassing their ability to regulate emotions and behavior effectively and to maintain a satisfying level of daily functioning.¹ It involves more than the absence of mental illness: a mentally healthy person can enjoy life, cope with ordinary stressors, work productively, and participate meaningfully in their community.²

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential,

can manage the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."³ This broad conception includes subjective well-being, autonomy, competence, and self-actualization of intellectual and emotional capacities.

Definitions of mental health may vary according to cultural context and theoretical orientation. Different professional frameworks emphasize distinct elements—such as interpersonal relationships, coping strategies, or social support—but all agree that psychological well-being is multidimensional.

Because mental health shapes our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors—affecting everything from eating and exercise habits to stress management—it is as fundamental to overall health as physical well-being. Recognizing its central role can help health professionals and communities build environments that foster emotional resilience and social connection.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the burden and treatment of mental health disorders at the Mental Health Center in Pristina by:

Quantifying prevalence trends over the past two years to determine whether patient numbers have risen or declined. Assessing pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions, with particular focus on the psychotropic medications prescribed. Characterizing demographic patterns, including age-group and gender distributions, to identify populations at greatest risk. Identifying the most frequent psychiatric diagnoses encountered within the center. Documenting treatment-related adverse effects reported by patients under care. Evaluating clinician engagement, measured by the degree of healthcare professional involvement in treatment planning and ongoing patient support

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted at the Mental Health Center in Pristina. Data collection was based on the patient registration protocols maintained by the center. The study covers two periods: January to December 2022 and January to December 2023, focusing on the treatment of patients with mental disorders. A comparison was made between these two years, along with an analysis of the collected data.

Patient confidentiality was strictly preserved throughout the study, as it represents a primary ethical requirement during data collection. Data processing was performed using the SPSS statistical software.

Method – The data collection method for the cases studied was retrospective. Questionnaires were also used as a tool for gathering information. Through these questionnaires, a set of questions was prepared and addressed to the main responsible

personnel working at the Mental Health Center in Pristina.

Unit of analysis – Patients treated at the Mental Health Center in Pristina.

Location of the research – Mental Health Center – Pristina.

Sample – A total of 155 patients were included from the period January–December 2023, and 110 patients from the period January–December 2022. Thus, the total number of patients for both periods was 265.

RESULTS

In general, it can be concluded that the findings from this study can be used for various purposes and new initiatives in this field aimed at improving the overall condition of the communities in general, so that patients with this type of problem have a better future, and also to move towards more effective improvements.

The questionnaire includes a total of 12 questions, which I divided into two parts. In the first part, I placed 6 questions for the year 2022, and in the second part, 6 questions for the year 2023. This study includes 155 patients for the year 2022 and 110 patients for the year 2023, making a total of 265 patients who are treated and cared for at the Mental Health Center in Pristina. The average age is 32.42, with a total number of patients being 155. January to December of the year 2022.

One of the questions asked was: Which gender group is more affected by mental illnesses? The table below clearly shows the gender that is more affected by mental disorders at the Mental Health Center in Pristina. Among the 155 patients studied, there were 76 female patients and 79 male patients, indicating that the male gender predominates for the period January to December 2022.

Table 4 Gender most affected by mental illnesses at the Mental Health Center in Pristina for the year 2022.

The figure above shows the dominant gender affected by mental illnesses during 2022, indicating that the male gender is the most affected.

One of the questions asked was: Which diagnosis is the most common among patients treated at the Mental Health Center in Pristina?

The table below clearly shows the diagnosis that is most prevalent among patients affected by mental illnesses at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 155 patients studied, 30 were diagnosed with Depression, 18 with Schizophrenia, 16 with Bipolar Disorder, 8 with Dementia, 8 with Anxiety Disorders, 7 with Conduct Disorders and Dissocial Disorder, 7 with Intellectual Disability, 6 with Mental Retardation, 6 with Epilepsy, 6 with Attention Deficit and Behavioral Disorders, 6 with Motor Skill Disorders, 6 with Eating Disorders, 6 with Muscle Disorders, 5 with ADHD, 4 with Communication Disorders, 4 with ASD, 4 with Psychosis, 4 with PTSD, 3 with Mood Disorders, and 1 with Learning Disorders.

It results that among the 155 patients, Depression was the most prevalent diagnosis for the period January–December 2022. Dominant diagnosis among patients affected by mental illnesses during 2022 shows that Depression is the most prevalent diagnosis. One of the questions asked was: Which pharmacological therapies are

Table 1. Chart of the dominant gender affected by mental illnesses during 2022

Gender	Total	Percentage (%)
Female	76	49.0
Male	79	51.0
Total	155	100.0

Table 3. Pharmacological therapy used in patients with mental illnesses during 2022 – graphical representation

Therapy	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV)	16	18	34
Olanzapina	13	13	26
Clozapina	3	6	9
Risperidoni	11	11	22
Escitalopram	11	4	15
Carbamazepine	3	5	8
Moditen-depo (IM)	6	9	15
Haloperidoli (IM)	5	5	10
Klonazepam	1	1	2
Amfetamina	3	3	6
Lorazepam	0	1	1
Fluoxetine	4	3	7
Total	76	79	155

most commonly used for the treatment of mental illnesses in patients? The table below clearly shows the pharmacological therapies most frequently used among patients affected by mental illnesses at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 155 patients studied, 34 used Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV), 26 used Olanzapine, 22 used Risperidone, 15 used Escitalopram, 15 used Moditen-depot (IM), 10 used Haloperidol (IM), 9 used Clozapine, 8 used Carbamazepine, 7 used Fluoxetine, 6 used Amphetamine, 2 used Clonazepam, and 1 used Lorazepam. In conclusion, the most commonly used therapy during the period January–December 2022 was Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV).

Table 2. Pharmacological therapy used in patients with mental illnesses during 2022

Therapy	Patient	Percentage (%)
Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV)	34	21.9
Olanzapina	26	16.8
Clozapina	9	5.8
Risperidoni	22	14.2
Escitalopram	15	9.7
Carbamazepine	8	5.2
Moditen-depo (IM)	15	9.7
Haloperidoli (IM)	10	6.5
Klonazepam	2	1.3
Amfetamina	6	3.9
Lorazepam	1	.6
Fluoxetine	7	4.5
Totali	155	100.0

Table 4. Side effects of pharmacological therapy used in patients during the year 2022

Side effects of the therapy	Patient	Percentage (%)
Overweight	19	12.3
Vomiting	19	12.3
Dizziness	8	5.2
Lethargy	31	20.0
Muscle weakness	9	5.8
Constipation	10	6.5
Headache	19	12.3
Difficulty breathing	28	18.1
Shaking	7	4.5
Blurred vision.	5	3.2
Total	155	100.0

The above figure presents the pharmacological therapy used in patients affected by mental illnesses throughout 2022, clearly showing that the most commonly used therapy was Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV).

In the table presented below, the pharmacological therapy used among 155 patients is also shown, including both female and male genders. In this case, 16 females and 18 males used Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV), 13 females and 13 males used Olanzapine, 3 females and 6 males used Clozapine, 11 females and 11 males used Risperidone, 11 females and 4 males used Escitalopram, 3 females and 6 males used Carbamazepine, 6 females and 9 males used

Moditen-depot (IM), 5 females and 5 males used Haloperidol (IM), 1 female and 1 male used Clonazepam, 3 females and 3 males used Amphetamines, 1 male used Lorazepam, and 4 females and 3 males used Fluoxetine.

One of the questions asked was: What are the side effects of the medications applied to patients with mental illnesses? The table below clearly shows the side effects of pharmacological therapy that appeared in patients affected by mental illnesses at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 155 patients studied, 31 experienced fatigue, 28 had difficulty breathing, 19 experienced overweight, 19 others had vomiting, 19 others suffered from headaches, 9 had muscle weakness, 10 had constipation, 8 patients had dizziness, 7 had tremors, and 5 patients had blurred vision. One of the most commonly observed side effects in patients with mental illnesses during the year 2022 was fatigue.

Table 5. Average Age of Patients with Mental Health Issues During 2023

Average age	Total number of patients
38.42	110

Table 7. Pharmacological Therapy Used in Patients with Mental Disorders During 2023

Diagnoses	Patient	Percentage %
Depression	30	19.4
Intellectual disability	6	3.9
Epilepsy	6	3.9
Attention deficit and behavioral disorder	6	3.9
Mood disorder	3	1.9
Communication disorders	4	2.6
Learning disorders.	1	.6
Motor skills disorders	6	3.9
Eating disorders	6	3.9
Muscle disorders.	6	3.9
Schizophrenia	18	11.6
Bipolar disorder	16	10.3
Dementia	8	5.2
ADHD	5	3.2
ASD	4	2.6
Psychosis	4	2.6
Anxiety disorders	8	5.2
PTSD	4	2.6
Conduct disorder and dissociative disorder	7	4.5
Intellectual disability	7	4.5
Total	155	100.0

Table 6. Dominant Gender Among Patients with Psychiatric Disorders During 2023

Gender	Patient	Percentage %
Female	47	42.7
Male	63	57.3
Total	110	100.0

Table 8. The figure below presents the pharmacological therapy used in patients affected by mental illnesses during 2023, clearly showing that the most frequently used therapy was Moditen-depot (IM)

Therapy	Patient	Percentage %
Diazepam (Oral, IM, IV)	11	10.0
Olanzapina	6	5.5
Clozapina	6	5.5
Risperidoni	7	6.4
Escitalopram	10	9.1
Carbamazepine	7	6.4
Moditen-depo (IM)	15	13.6
Haloperidoli (IM)	12	10.9
Klonazepam	10	9.1
Amfetamina	11	10.0
Lorazepam	8	7.3
Fluoxetine	7	6.4
Totali	110	100.0

Table 9. Most prevalent side effects in patients with mental illnesses during 2023

Side Effects	Gender		Total
	Female	Male	
Overweight	9	11	20
Vomiting	3	5	8
Dizziness	4	3	7
Lethargy	5	6	11
Muscle weakness	3	8	11
Constipation	2	8	10
Headache	5	7	12
Difficulty in breathing	9	11	20
Tremors	3	1	4
Visual disturbance	4	3	7
Total	47	63	110

Side Effects in Patients with Mental Illnesses During 2022 in Graphical Form

The figure above presents the side effects that appeared in patients affected by mental illnesses throughout 2022, clearly showing that the most common side effect was fatigue.

One of the questions asked was: Are the services provided only at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina? The answer was: In addition to the services provided at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina, there are separate teams that conduct home visits, which include administering therapy, family consultations, and counseling offered to these patients

This table 5. clearly shows that among 110 patients, the average age most affected by

Table 10. Comparative Table 2022–2023

Indicator	2022	2023
Total number of patients	155	110
Mean age (years)	32.42	38.42
Male (%)	51.0	57.3
Female (%)	49.0	42.7
Most frequent diagnosis	Depression	Anxiety
Most commonly used therapy	Diazepam	Moditen-depot (IM)
Most common side effect	Fatigue	Overweight & Breathing difficulties

mental disorders at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina was 38.42 years during the period from January to December 2023. One of the questions asked was: *Which gender group is more affected by mental disorders?* The table below clearly presents the gender most affected by mental health disorders at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 110 patients studied, there were 47 female patients and 63 male patients, indicating that the male gender was more dominant during the period from January to December 2023.

The following figure presents the dominant gender affected by psychiatric disorders throughout 2023, indicating that the most affected gender was male.

The most dominant gender among patients diagnosed with mental disorders during 2023 is shown in graphic format. One of the key questions raised was: *Which diagnosis is most frequent among patients treated at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina?* The table below clearly shows the

most prevalent diagnosis among patients affected by mental disorders at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Out of the 110 patients studied, 7 were diagnosed with Depression, 9 with Schizophrenia, 8 with Bipolar Disorder, 8 with Dementia, 13 with Anxiety Disorders, 4 with Disruptive and Dissocial Behavior Disorders, 5 with Intellectual Disability, 5 with Mental Retardation, 7 with Epilepsy, 5 with Attention Deficit and Behavioral Disorders, 2 with Motor Skill Disorders, 4 with Eating Disorders, 4 with Muscular Disorders, 5 with ADHD, 4 with Communication Disorders, 4 with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), 4 with Psychosis, 5 with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), 3 with Mood Disorders, and 4 with Learning Disorders.

As the data indicates, among the 110 patients studied, the most frequently diagnosed condition during the period January–December 2023 was Anxiety Disorder.

The figure below presents the predominant diagnoses among patients affected by mental

disorders throughout 2023, indicating that anxiety disorder was the most prevalent diagnosis. The graphical representation clearly illustrates anxiety disorder as the leading diagnosis in patients with mental illnesses during 2023.

One of the key questions posed was: Which pharmacological therapies are most frequently used for the treatment of mental disorders in patients? The table below clearly shows the pharmacological treatments most commonly employed among patients treated at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 110 patients studied, 11 patients used Diazepam (oral, IM, IV), 6 used Olanzapine, 7 used Risperidone, 10 used Escitalopram, 15 received Moditen-depot (IM), 12 were treated with Haloperidol (IM), 6 with Clozapine, 7 with Carbamazepine, 7 with Fluoxetine, 11 with Amphetamine, 10 with Clonazepam, and 8 with Lorazepam.

In conclusion, Moditen-depot (IM) was the most commonly used therapy during the period from January to December 2023.

One of the questions asked was: What are the side effects of the medications administered to patients with mental illnesses? The table below clearly shows the side effects observed in patients treated with pharmacological therapy at the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Among the 110 patients studied, 9 females and 11 males experienced overweight; 9 females and 11 males had breathing difficulties; 5 females and 6 males suffered from lethargy; 3 females and 5 males experienced vomiting; 5 females and 7 males reported headaches; 3 females and 8 males had muscle weakness; 2 females and 8 males experienced constipation; 4 females and 3 males had dizziness; 3 females and 1 male suffered from tremors; and 4 females and 3 males experienced blurred vision. The most common side effects among patients with mental illnesses during 2023 were overweight and breathing difficulties.

DISCUSSION

From 2019 through 2022, the Mental Health Center in Prishtina observed a marked rise in the number of patients presenting with mental disorders, a trend temporally associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic. Widespread lockdowns, social distancing measures, and

disruption of daily routines intensified feelings of isolation and uncertainty across multiple domains including health, economic stability, and education, thereby exacerbating psychological distress among vulnerable populations.¹

Global estimates prior to the pandemic indicated that approximately one in eight individuals, nearly 970 million people worldwide, lived with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders being the most prevalent.² In the first year of the pandemic alone, these figures surged by an estimated 26% for anxiety disorders and 28% for major depressive disorder, reflecting the profound mental health impact of COVID-19 and its associated stressors.³ Despite the availability of evidence-based prevention and treatment modalities, access to adequate care remains limited for many, while stigma and discrimination continue to pose significant barriers to help-seeking behaviors.^t

Disruptive behavior and dissocial (conduct) disorders, characterized by persistent patterns of defiance, aggression, or rule-breaking that violate the rights of others, represent a substantial proportion of referrals, particularly among children and adolescents. In 2019 alone, an estimated 40 million young people globally were affected by conduct disorders.^u More broadly, mental disorders are defined by clinically significant disturbances in cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior, frequently accompanied by distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The term “mental health conditions” encompasses these disorders as well as related psychosocial disabilities and states associated with heightened risk of self-harm or functional decline.^v

To mitigate the burden of mental illness and promote resilience, public health recommendations emphasize regular physical activity, balanced nutrition, adequate hydration, and structured daily routines. Additional strategies include relaxation practices (such as mindfulness or deep-breathing exercises), goal setting, and fostering positive social connections. These interventions, when integrated into comprehensive treatment plans, can enhance overall well-being and support recovery among affected individuals.^w

The comparison between 2022 and 2023 reveals notable changes in the patient profile. The

number of patients decreased from 155 in 2022 to 110 in 2023, while the mean age increased from 32.42 to 38.42 years. The proportion of males increased from 51.0% to 57.3%, maintaining male predominance in both years. The most frequent diagnosis in 2022 was depression, whereas in 2023 anxiety disorders were the most common. In terms of pharmacotherapy, Diazepam was the most prescribed drug in 2022, while Moditen-depot (IM) dominated in 2023. Adverse effects also shifted: fatigue was most common in 2022, whereas in 2023 overweight and breathing difficulties were predominant. These variations may be linked to clinical factors, socio-economic influences, and changes in therapeutic practices during the two study years.

Recommendations

The slight decline in patient volume from 2022 to 2023 underscores the need for intensified, targeted interventions to sustain and accelerate this positive trend. In light of the observed demographic and treatment patterns, we propose the following evidence-informed recommendations:

Enhance outreach and early identification in male populations. Given the predominance of male patients (51% in 2022; 57.3% in 2023) and their elevated risk factors such as financial/legal stressors, substance use, and suicide, tailored screening programs should be implemented in community and primary-care settings. Collaborations with local employers, legal aid services, and substance-use clinics may facilitate earlier detection and referral.

Optimize pharmacotherapy protocols. The shift from oral/IM/IV diazepam toward IM Moditen-depo highlights evolving prescribing trends. A regular audit of psychotropic prescriptions benchmarking against international guidelines will help ensure appropriateness, monitor adverse effects, and minimize polypharmacy. Where feasible, integrate shared decision-making with patients to improve adherence and satisfaction.

Maintain stable age-appropriate services. With mean patient age remaining fairly constant (32.4 years in 2022 vs. 38.4 years in 2023), service delivery should continue to address both young-adult and middle-aged cohorts. Age-stratified psychoeducation groups and peer-support networks can address developmental challenges unique to each group.

Expand non-pharmacological and lifestyle interventions. Physical activity emerged as a universally beneficial recommendation. To operationalize this, the Center should partner with community gyms, sports clubs, and outdoor-activity organizations to offer structured exercise programs ranging from guided group walks and dance classes to gardening and cycling workshops.

Strengthen multidisciplinary care and follow-up. Regular case-conferences involving psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and nursing staff can facilitate comprehensive care planning. Standardize follow-up intervals (e.g., monthly reviews) and use brief outcome measures (e.g., PHQ-9, GAD-7) to monitor progress and adjust treatment promptly.

Implement stigma-reduction and mental-health literacy campaigns. To normalize help-seeking and reduce discrimination, the Center should develop targeted outreach, such as community seminars, school-based workshops, and social-media messaging, highlighting recovery stories and practical self-care strategies.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study clearly demonstrate that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly exacerbated the prevalence of mental health disorders, with noticeable increases in anxiety, depression, and dissocial behavior, particularly in the population attending the Mental Health Center in Prishtina. Although the number of patients slightly decreased in 2023, the overall burden of mental illness remains high, particularly among males, who continue to face disproportionate psychosocial stressors, including financial and legal difficulties. These findings align with global data showing that mental health conditions surged during the pandemic and persist as a major public health challenge.

The shift in pharmacological treatment, from the dominant use of Diazepam in 2022 to a preference for long-acting antipsychotics such as Moditen-depo in 2023, suggests an adaptation in clinical practice toward more sustained therapeutic strategies. However, this also reflects the chronic nature of some disorders and the need for more comprehensive management plans.

This study reinforces the importance of a multidisciplinary and proactive approach to mental health. Despite existing therapies and support systems, barriers such as stigma, limited access to care, and lack of public awareness continue to hinder recovery and rehabilitation. It is therefore essential to integrate prevention strategies, psychosocial support, and early interventions into community mental health frameworks.

Overall, mental health should be prioritized not only as a medical condition but also as a societal imperative. Investing in awareness, resilience-building, and personalized care, while fostering healthier lifestyles, can significantly reduce the long-term consequences of mental disorders. The data presented here serve as a call to action for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities to build a more inclusive and responsive mental health system.

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This research did not involve human participants, animal subjects, or any material that requires ethical approval.

Informed Consent Statement

This study did not involve human

participants, and therefore, informed consent was not required.

Clinical Trial Registration

This research does not involve any clinical trials.

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Not Applicable

Authors' Contribution

Prof. Dr. Fitim Alidema: Led the research project, conceptualized the study, supervised data collection and analysis, and wrote the manuscript; Arieta Hasani Alidema: Made valuable contributions to data collection and processing, provided expertise in neurology, and assisted with the translation of material into English; Lirim Mustafa, Dia Balidemaj, Albulena Jashari Selmani contributed to the data collection and statistical part.

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