

Adverse Effect Monitoring of Clozapine at the National Mental Health Services, Malta



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INTRODUCTION

- Clozapine is prescribed when other antipsychotics have failed to achieve the desired result, typically in treatment resistant schizophrenia.
- Clozapine should be offered after two trials of antipsychotics, one of which being Olanzapine.
- As a result of targeting multiple neurotransmitter receptors, Clozapine produces several unwanted effects which start to occur 4-8 weeks after initiation.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess whether adverse effects are monitored, clinically and biochemically, in patients on Clozapine at the National Mental Health Services (NMHS) in Malta.
- To identify which adverse effects, if any, are being monitored.
- To assess whether action was taken where adverse effects were identified.

METHODOLOGY

- All patients who were prescribed Clozapine for the entire year in 2024 were included in this audit.
- Data was collected from medical records and the electronic investigation system and analysed against the NICE 10 and Maudsley guidelines.

RESULTS

- 136 out of 246 (55%) patients were included in view of completeness of available records, with the majority (60%) being male.
- Monthly documentation of weight, BMI, Respiratory rate, Heart rate, Blood pressure, and Nicotine use, was never done, except for two one-off instances.
- Apart from reactions monitored through CBC, LFT, and RP, all others were inquired into substantially less (Fig 2. & 3.)
- 'As needed' investigations, Prolactin and Creatine Kinase, were done in 14% of patients, and in only one instance was the reason documented.
- Instances of adverse reactions were noted in 21% of patients and acted upon in 57% of instances, with no resultant hospitalisations.

Fig 1. Annual Investigations

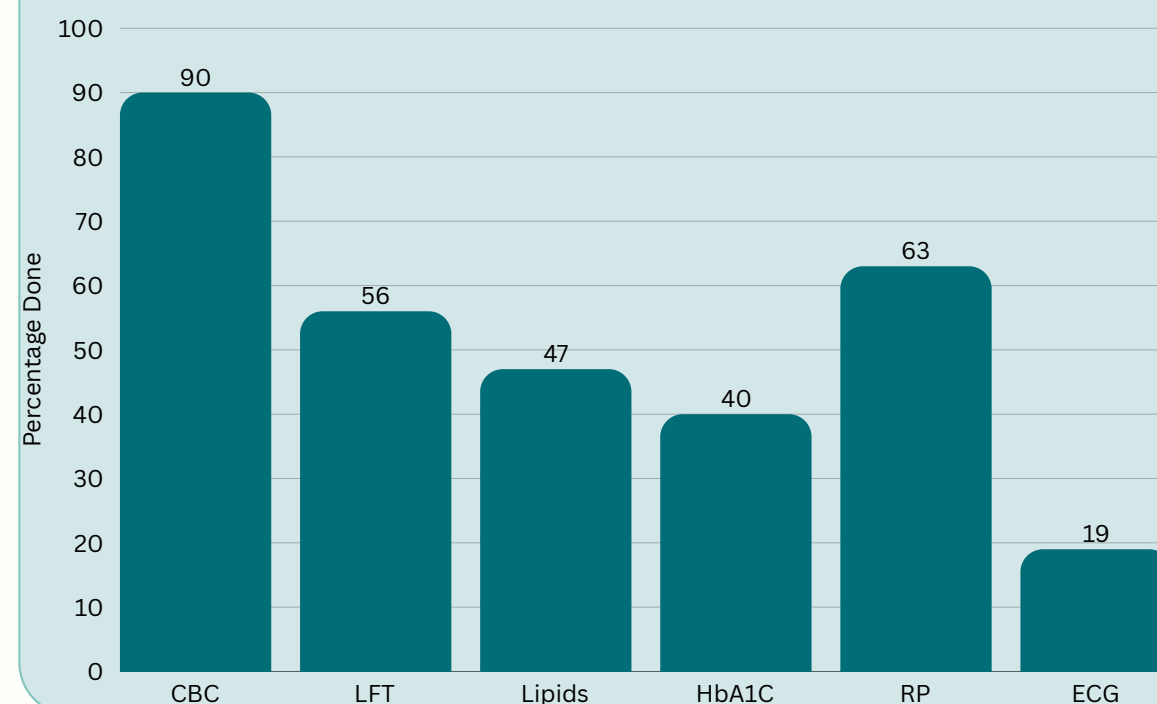


Fig 2. Common Adverse Reactions

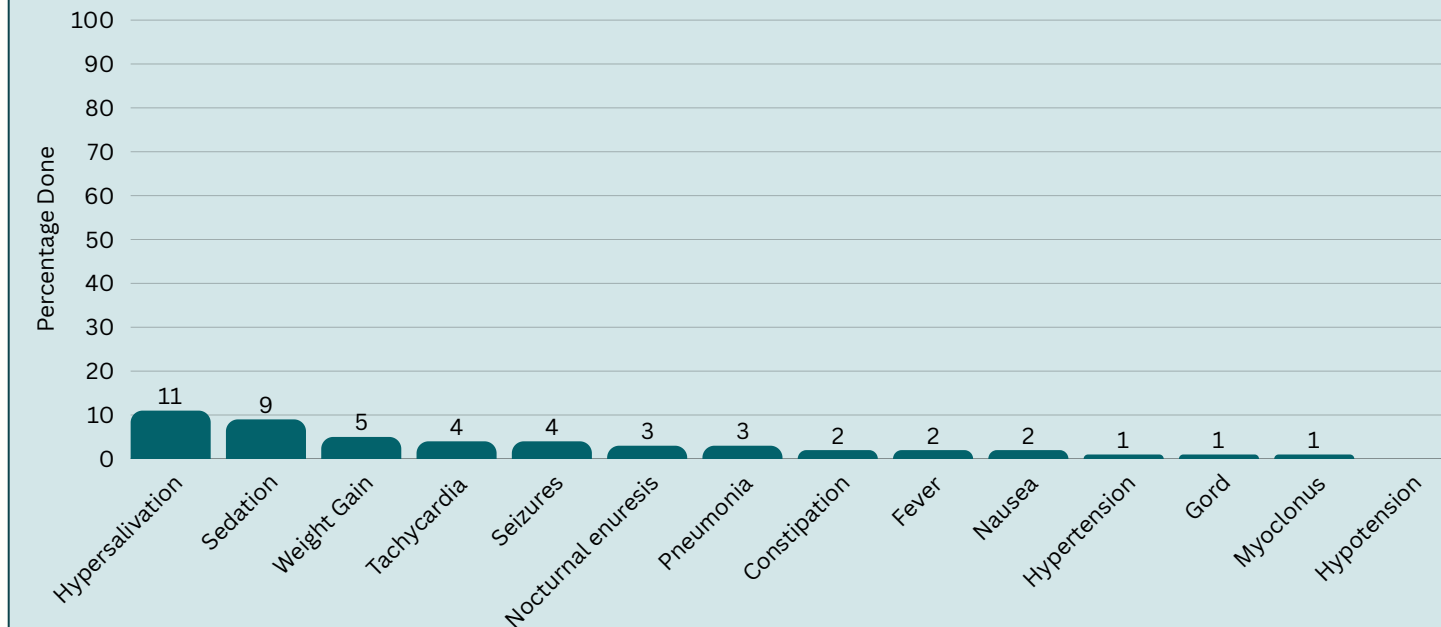
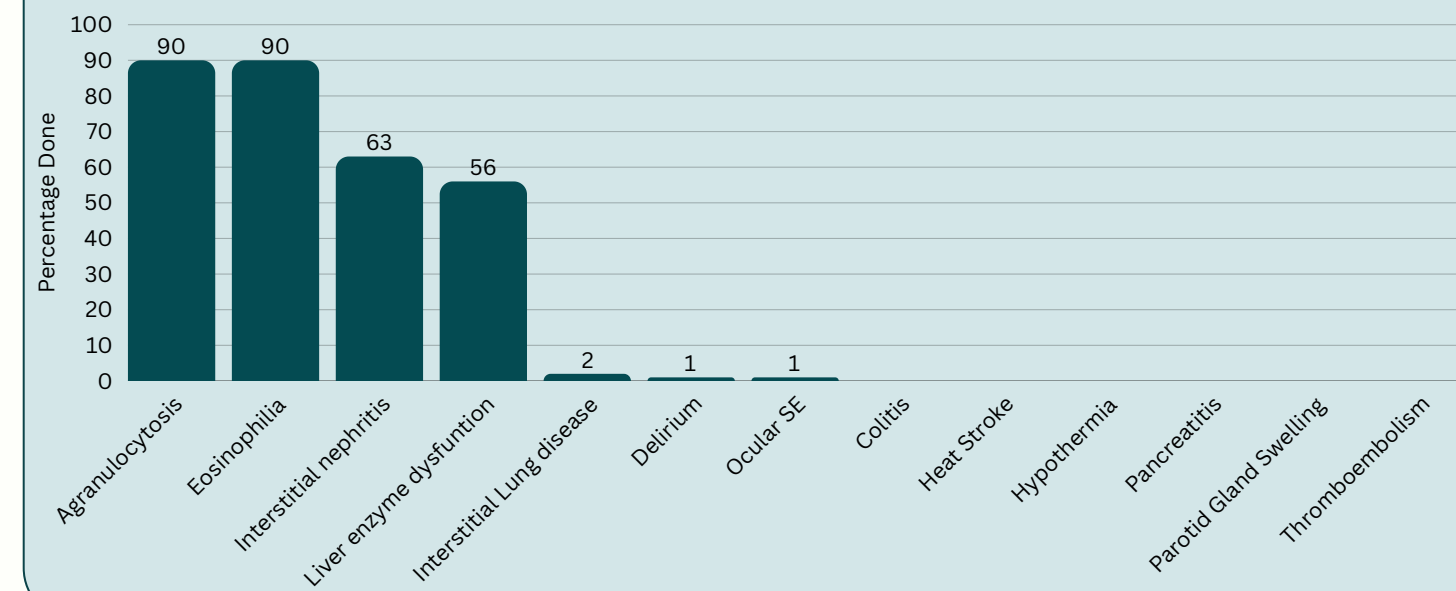


Fig 3. Uncommon Adverse Reactions



CONCLUSION

- This audit highlights the need for improvement in the investigation and adverse effect monitoring to improve standards of care for patients prescribed Clozapine.