



EPA PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY SECTION REPORT 2023

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LAST SECTION COMMITTEE ELECTIONS HELD:

Date: 26 March 2023

Venue: EPA Congress Paris, France

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECTION IN 2023:

A. Section meeting

The section had one meeting in person during the EPA congress in Paris on the 26th March 2023.

B. Symposia

EPA Congress: The 31st European Congress of Psychiatry, 25-28 March 2023, Paris, France

Symposium: How to prevent first onset and relapse of serious psychiatric diseases

This was a joint symposium with the section of Prevention of Mental Disorders.

Chair: Pavel Mohr (Czechia)

Co-Chair: Andrea Raballo (Italy)

1. Pharmacotherapy of high-risk population for developing psychosis. Presenter: Pavel Mohr (Czechia)
2. Onset and relapse prevention of bipolar disorders. Presenter: Eduard Vieta (Spain)
3. Prevention strategies in clinical high-risks states for psychotic disorders: weighing up costs and benefits? Presenter: Frauke Schultze-Lutter (Germany)
4. Pharmacological treatment at early psychosis: risks and benefits. Presenter: Liene Sile (Latvia)

Annotation:

The symposium addressed the issue of prevention of serious mental disorders, with focus on high-risk individuals for developing severe psychiatric illnesses (primary indicated prevention) and patients with relapsing course of disorder (tertiary prevention). We reviewed and discussed the evidence of pharmacological, psychological or other non-pharmacological strategies in preventing new illness onset, and reducing risk of relapse and functional decline. Thereby, the focus was especially on the clinical high-risk samples for developing and patient samples at risk for redeveloping psychotic or bipolar disorder. Critically evaluating costs and benefits of the different intervention strategies, the symposium provided clinicians with a basis for a well-informed decision on preventive strategies for both first-onset and relapse of psychotic and bipolar disorders.



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EPA Congress. The 31st European Congress of Psychiatry, 25-28 March 2023, Paris (France)

Course: A practice oriented intensive course on pharmacological treatment of schizophrenia and some other disorders

Organised by the EPA Section of Psychopharmacology.

Chairs: István Bitter, Hungary & Matej Stuhec, Slovenia

C. Other activities (/)

EPA Online Talks With Experts meeting

- Collaboration with the EPA Section “Early Career Psychiatrists (ECP)”

The project format (<https://www.europsy.net/online-talks-with-experts/>) involved a 15-minute presentation by an expert and 45 minutes of questions and answers by an audience of ECPs from Europe (moderated by the EPA Committee Members of both sections: Psychopharmacology and ECP). The session took place in April 2023 (after the EPA Congress 2023) and was thought to help ECPs in Europe to improve their clinical practice and knowledge of psychopharmacology.

30- min individual online meeting between Pavel Mohr and Jerzy Samochowiec (EPA Secretary for Sections) in September 2023

- contribution in creating the European Training Requirements for Psychopharmacology
- creation of the Curriculum Programme

Book chapters:

- **EPA book: Mental Health Research and Practice - From Evidence to Experience**, edited by Andrea Fiorillo, University of Campania “L. Vanvitelli”, Naples, Peter Falkai, International Max Planck Research School for Translational Psychiatry, Munich, Philip Gorwood, Sainte-Anne Hospital, Paris. **Chapter “Physical health of patients with schizophrenia: management of antipsychotic-induced side effects and treatment of comorbid somatic conditions”** by Pavel Mohr, Matej Stuhec, István Bitter.

- **WPA book - Chapter “The role of pharmacotherapy in the management of comorbidities”** by István Bitter, Matej Stuhec, Pavel Mohr.



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Scientific opinion:

- **Opinion on the position paper “Pharmacovigilance, with a focus on medication errors” (on the behalf of EPA)**

Webinar for NPAs: “Long-term treatment of Bipolar Disorders: Advantages, Disadvantages and Limits to the Use of Lithium. A European Perspective”.

Chairs: Prof. Pavel Mohr, Czechia & Prof. Eka Chkonia

Following from the success of the first webinar dedicated to NPAs, a second online event took place on Tuesday, 7 November 2023. Prof. Pavel Mohr focussed his presentation on the long-lasting significance of lithium as a treatment option for bipolar disorder despite changes in prescription tendencies. Practical issues related to the use of lithium were discussed. The presentation was followed by a Q&A session with all participants. The topic and the invited expert generated considerable interest among NPAs and their members, with a total of 50 participants from 10 countries attending the webinar.

Contribution as EPA expert in EMA: EMA review of the risk of paternal exposure to valproate on offspring: <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/ema-review-data-paternal-exposure-valproate>

Pavel Mohr serves as expert of the EMA’s Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) reviewing data on the potential risk of neurodevelopmental disorders (NDDs) in children conceived by fathers taking valproate medicines. The review focuses on data from a [retrospective observational study](#) conducted by companies as an obligation following a [previous review](#) of valproate use during pregnancy. This retrospective observational study compares the risk of NDDs (including autism spectrum disorder) in children born to men taking valproate with the risk in children born to men taking lamotrigine or levetiracetam (other treatments for epilepsy). It is carried out using multiple registry databases in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. Initial results of the study may indicate an increased risk of NDDs in children born to men taking valproate in the three months before conception. Although the PRAC will review the required data as they become available and make an EU-wide recommendation, some member states have implemented interim national recommendations. Male patients being treated with valproate should not stop taking their medicine without talking to their doctor, as their epilepsy or bipolar disorder could become worse. Sudden discontinuation of treatment for epilepsy could trigger seizures. [Previous recommendations](#) to avoid exposure to valproate medicines in women during pregnancy due to the risk of congenital malformations (birth defects) and neurodevelopmental disorders remain in place.

Contribution as EPA expert in the European Academy of Neurology: Pavel Mohr



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FUTURE ACTIVITIES:

The section plans the following activities in 2024:

A) **InterACT e-newsletter** (/)

B) **Symposia, workshop and course**

EPA Congress. The 32nd European Congress of Psychiatry, 06-09 April 2024, Budapest (Hungary)

Symposium: Treatment guidelines and clinical practice in the management of depression (focus on comorbidity)

This symposium has already been accepted.

Chairs: Pavel Mohr, Matej Stuhec

Speakers: Judit Balasz, Antoni Ramos-Quiroga, Lucie Bartova, Allan Young

Symposium Description:

Depression remains among the leading causes of the global health-related burden, with high rates of disability. Among others, the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemics is one of the reasons of its increasing prevalence. There are numerous challenges in the management of depression in clinical practice, typically not covered by the current treatment guidelines. For example, depression is frequently associated with comorbidity, both psychiatric and physical. Comorbid illnesses contribute to the burden of the disorder, reduce treatment response, result in polypharmacy, lower quality of life, induce higher socioeconomic costs, or increase mortality rates. The symposium will address several problematic issues in the pharmacotherapy of depression: comorbidity with physical illness, substance use, cognitive impairment, and age-related comorbidity during the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

EPA Congress. The 32nd European Congress of Psychiatry, 06-09 April 2024, Budapest (Hungary)

Course: A practice oriented intensive course on pharmacological treatment of schizophrenia and some other psychotic disorders

This course has already been accepted.

Chairs: Istvan Bitter, Matej Stuhec

Course Description:

This interactive, evidence-based course was originally designed for early career psychiatrists, however we experienced more interest from “mid carrier” colleagues in clinical practice. Based on the feedback from participants during the “in person” course this year we modified the content of the course:

- Short and long term treatment of schizophrenia with antipsychotics



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- Dose response relationship of antipsychotic drugs : How to define the "right dose"? Is there a therapeutic window? The roll Therapeutic (plasma level) drug monitoring
- Different formulations of antipsychotics
- Comparative effectiveness of antipsychotics
- Pharmacological treatment of negative symptoms in schizophrenia
- The role of antipsychotics and other drugs in the management of agitation, suicidal and violent behavior in schizophrenia
- Partial response and treatment resistance: Antipsychotic monotherapy vs. switching to polypharmacy or clozapine treatment
- Length of antipsychotic treatment in schizophrenia; how to discontinue antipsychotic treatment
- Antipsychotic treatment in the elderly: schizophrenia and psychosis related to dementia
- Management of the most frequent side effects and drug-drug interactions during treatment with antipsychotics

EPA Congress. The 32nd European Congress of Psychiatry, 06-09 April 2024, Budapest (Hungary)

Workshop: Medication-related issues in antipsychotic treatment during transition from adulthood to elderly age (indications, dosing, interactions)

This workshop has already been accepted.

This is a joint workshop with the section of Old Age Psychiatry.

Chairs: Cecile Hanon, Istvan Bitter

Speakers: Istvan Bitter, Gabriela Stoppe, Pavel Mohr, Matej Stuhec, Filip Bouckaert, George Stercu

Workshop Description:

Antipsychotics (AP) are the primary treatment option for schizophrenia and other disorders. Many AP failed to outperform placebo in elderly patients (in contrast to adults), data on their efficacy in older age are often lacking. Lower efficacy poses a clinical problem during the transition into old age; older patients are underrepresented in the RCTs and studies comparing AP monotherapy to polypharmacy. In addition to schizophrenia, AP are also administered for other indications, e.g., delirium treatment, depression, or off-label for insomnia and restlessness in dementia. Pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics change during lifetime; common physical comorbidity results in polypharmacy and increased risk of drug-drug interactions. The workshop will discuss the essential issues of AP treatment (e.g. schizophrenia and delirium), including a gap between evidence-based medicine and real clinical pharmacology during the transition from adulthood into old age. A clinical case of a 72 years old female patient diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder and severe comorbidities will be presented by an early career psychiatrist.. Discussed will be dosing, polypharmacy comorbidities, drug-drug interactions, and adverse reactions. The participants will learn how to prescribe AP rationally during the transition from adulthood into old age, based on evidence-based data and real clinical pharmacology.



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FUNDING IN 2023

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