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Carta al Editor

Reply to comments on the PSICU-ALTA protocol: first steps toward improving psychotropic prescribing after ICU discharge

Respuesta a los comentarios sobre el protocolo PSICU-ALTA: primeros pasos para mejorar la prescripción de psicotrópicos tras el alta de la UCI

We sincerely thank the authors of the letter for their thoughtful and constructive comments on the 'PSICU-ALTA protocol'[1] published a few months ago. We especially appreciate the external perspective, which highlights the relevance of the topic and offers valuable suggestions to improve its translational value.

Continuing treatment with psychotropic drugs after discharge from the ICU is a complex and multifactorial problem. Our current protocol was deliberately designed as an exploratory, descriptive, observational study with pragmatic endpoints. The study was approved by the corresponding Research Ethics Committee, which granted a waiver of informed consent given that no interventions beyond usual clinical practice are performed and data are collected retrospectively and anonymized. This approach represents a necessary first step in generating national data on rates of continuation of treatment with psychotropic drugs before moving on to the intervention phases.[2]

We fully agree that qualitative methodologies, explicit suitability assessments, and a broader view of polypharmacy represent important dimensions that could enrich our understanding of this phenomenon. Similarly, the incorporation of intervention strategies, such as decision support tools and pharmacist-led reconciliation at all levels of care, are promising avenues that we intend to incorporate in later phases of the project, which may require formal patient consent for active intervention.

Therefore, we consider that the thoughtful comments raised by the authors are not limitations of the current protocol, but rather opportunities for the natural evolution of the PSICU-ALTA study toward more comprehensive phases.

Once again, we appreciate the interest in our work and the constructive contributions, which we are sure will help shape the future developments of the project.

Ethical considerations

The study referenced in the letter was evaluated and approved as an observational study with medications (prospective) by the Research Ethics Committee of the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital on September 29, 2023 (promoter code PSICU-ALTA). All collaborating investigators will sign a commitment to ensure compliance with Good Clinical Practice standards and the Helsinki Declaration. Given the observational nature of the study without interventions, informed consent was waived. At all times, confidentiality and anonymity of information related to patients, professionals, and ICU participants will be guaranteed, ensuring compliance with Organic Law 3/2018 of December 5th, on Data Protection and the Guarantee of Digital Rights. The study results will not be directly binding for professionals or patients; therefore, a commitment to publish both positive and negative results is made.

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Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

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Authorship declaration

The roles of the authors are detailed according to the CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy): Conceptualization (LD, SC); Drafting the original manuscript (SC, JS, LD, MM, AE); Writing, reviewing, and editing (SC, JS, LD, MM, AE).

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest.

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Laura Doménech-Moral
Servicio de Farmacia Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain
Corresponding author at: Servicio de Farmacia, Hospital Universitari Vall d'Hebron, 119–129, 08035, Barcelona, Spain.
E-mail address: laura.domenech@vallhebron.cat

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Javier Santader-Reboreda
Servicio de Farmacia Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain

Meri Martin-Cerezuela
Servicio de Farmacia Hospital Universitari La Fe, Valencia, Spain

Amaia Egüés Lugea
Servicio de Farmacia del Complejo Hospitalario de Navarra, Pamplona, Spain

Marcos Buj Vicente
Servicio de Medicina Intensiva Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain

Sofía Contreras Medina
Servicio de Medicina Intensiva Hospital Universitario Vall d'Hebron, Barcelona, Spain