

Pain and Pregab: A medicine use audit of pregabalin prescribing

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Background

Pregabalin is a gabapentinoid anticonvulsant which is widely used as an analgesic. Concerns have been raised in recent years regarding the potential harms of pregabalin. These include dependence, abuse, and risk of death in overdose (particularly in combination with opioids). This concern is particularly warranted given they are often inappropriately prescribed for conditions for which there is minimal evidence of benefit (i.e., lower back pain).

Aims and Objectives

To investigate the appropriateness of pregabalin prescribing in patients admitted to a large tertiary hospital.



Source: clinicaltrialsarena.com

Methods

An audit was conducted by four intern pharmacists on the appropriateness of pregabalin prescribing in patients admitted to general medicine, spinal injuries unit, geriatric and rehabilitation unit, general surgery, or ED/MAPU wards. The audit was performed by patient interview and review of documentation.

Appropriateness was determined by comparing the dose and indication to Australian guidelines and evaluating efficacy and tolerability in individual patients.

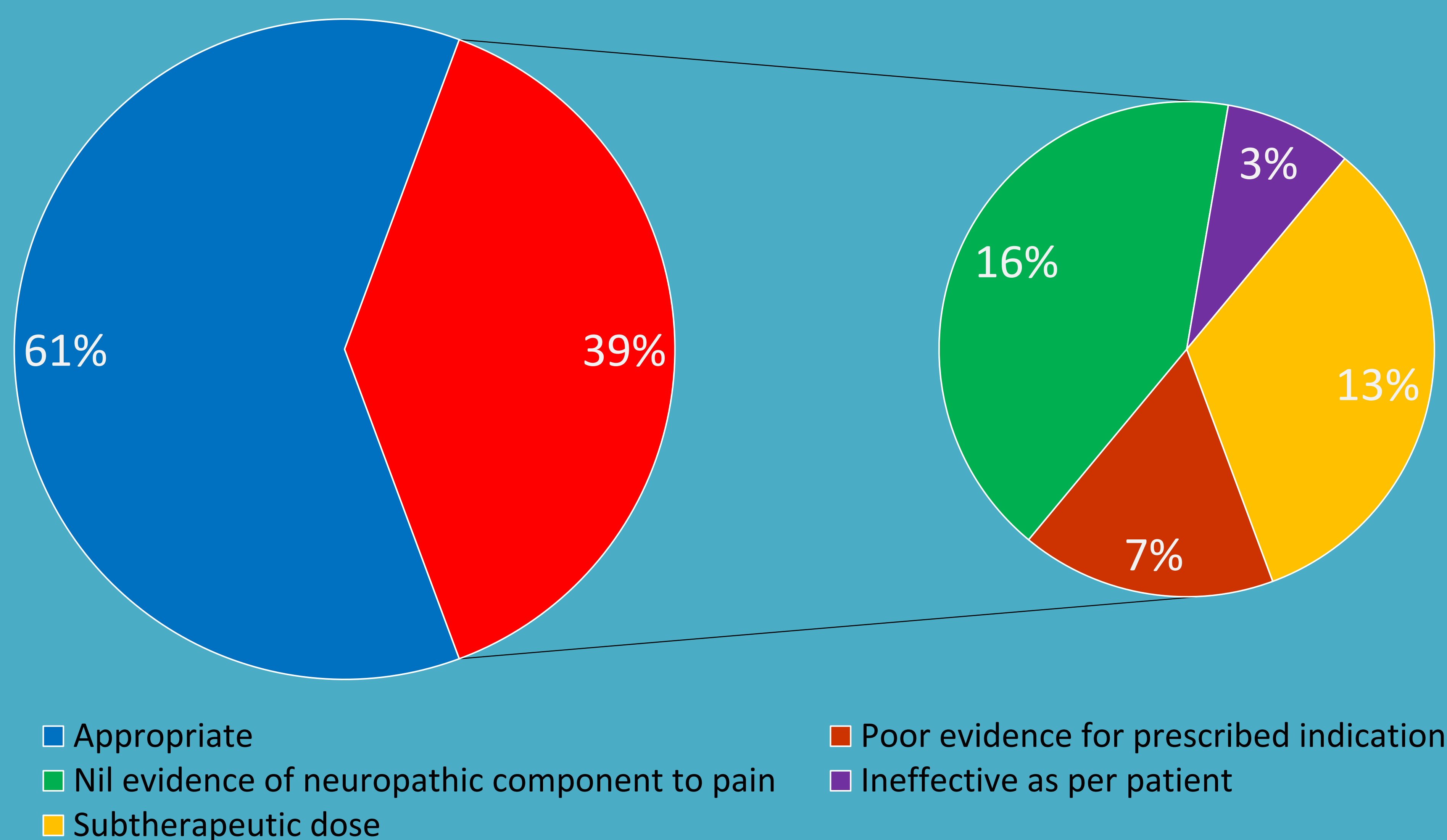
Results

31 patients were audited.

- 68% (21/31) of included patients were male
- Mean age was 63 years (range 19-91).
- Median total daily dose of pregabalin used was 125mg (range 25mg-600mg).

42% (12/31) of patients were considered to have inappropriate prescribing of pregabalin. The most common reasons for this were lacking evidence of neuropathic pain (42%, 5/12) or a subtherapeutic dose, (33%, 4/12). 35% of patients had a co-prescribed opioid, and 16% had a co-prescribed TCA or SNRI.

Frequency of inappropriate prescribing of pregabalin



Discussion

This audit highlights the importance of pharmacist's role in evaluating the indication, dose, and duration of pregabalin for patients admitted to their wards. This can enable interventions which can improve the safety of patients and reduce unwarranted prescribing of pregabalin.