

Chapter 1

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS IN THE TREATMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

Rumeysa EREN¹
Elif ULUTAŞ DENİZ²

1. INTRODUCTION

Chronic and enduring psychiatric disorders including psychotic disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and major depression; any mental illness that adversely affects an individual's social connections, academic accomplishments, and work performance (1). Individuals living with these conditions have a life expectancy that is up to 25 years shorter than that of the general population. This primarily stems from modifiable lifestyle elements like tobacco use, absence of physical activity, poor eating habits, antipsychotic medication's adverse reactions, and the stress of living with a mental illness (2). In 2003, over 450 million individuals worldwide were reported to grapple with mental disorders; this number is much higher today, and it is emphasized that mental health medicines account for a significant proportion of the medicines prescribed by physicians (3). This group exhibits a notably elevated prevalence of coexisting avoidable chronic ailments, such as type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular, and respiratory conditions. For this reason, they have been identified as a major burden on the US economy (2).

Considering the individual, societal, and financial consequences of people with untreated psychotic disorders, the involvement of primary healthcare professionals is essential to guarantee sufficient assistance for this demographic. Healthcare experts have recognized that people affected by mental health conditions as individuals presenting some of the most challenging cases for management (4). Moreover, these patients are 1.5 to 10 times more inclined to visit their pharmacist than their primary care physician (5). The treatment of more serious mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, has leaned heavily on

¹ Res. Asst., Atatürk University, Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy Management, e-mail: ecz.rumeysaeren@gmail.com, ORCID iD:0000-0003-0686-9172

² Asst. Prof., Atatürk University, Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacy Management, e-mail: eczelifulutas@gmail.com, ORCID iD: 0000-0001-7257-9224

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