

## **Gender and age related differences in the use of medicines for chronic diseases among undocumented migrants.**

G. Fiorini, C. Cerri, A. E. Rigamonti, S. Bini, N. Marazzi, A. Sartorio, S. G. Cella

International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care 14: 221-229, 2018.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to evaluate gender-related differences in the use of drugs for chronic diseases in undocumented migrants.

Design/methodology/approach: The authors analyzed the databases of two charitable organizations providing medical help and medicines to undocumented migrants. Data were available for 9.822 patients in the period 2014-2016. The authors grouped medicines according to the Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification. We considered the ATC group as an indicator of a group of diseases.

Findings: Both males and females needed medicines for chronic diseases in a comparable manner. When we analyzed the age distribution, The authors noticed that males showed a tendency to begin to be affected at an earlier age; however, this cumulative difference was not statistically significant. But when we looked at six groups of drugs separately (cardiovascular, respiratory, anti-thrombotic, neurologic, psychiatric, anti diabetic), the authors found that females always needed drugs for chronic diseases at a later age, always with a significant difference ( $p < 0.0001$  for cardiovascular, antithrombotic, antidiabetic and psychoactive drugs;  $p < 0.002$  for neurologic products;  $p < 0.04$  for drugs used in chronic respiratory conditions).

Research limitations/implications: This is a retrospective study based on the analysis of existing databases, but the peculiar features of this population (undocumented migrants) do not allow at the moment controlled studies.

Practical implications: Our observations could be important when planning public health strategies, especially in the field of prevention.

Originality/value: This is the first report of gender differences in the use of medicines for chronic diseases within a large sample of undocumented migrants.

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