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A cost-utility analysis of pregabalin versus venlafaxine XR in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder in Portugal.

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Objectivos (Objectives): Generalized anxiety disorder is characterized by excessive anxiety and worry about several events and activities. The 1-year prevalence for adults is around 2% and the lifetime prevalence could reach more than 6%. The disease is associated with reduced quality of life, being comparable to that of major depressive disorder and to chronic illnesses as diabetes and arthritis, and high consumption of health care resources. The objective of this economic evaluation is thus to compare the use of pregabalin and venlafaxin in patients with this disease.

Metodologia (Methodology): A previously published patient-level simulation model was adapted to the Portuguese context in order to evaluate clinical and economic consequences of using pregabalin instead of venlafaxine XR in the treatment of generalized anxiety disorder. The model predicts the evolution of 1.000 patients with generalised anxiety disorder, simulating their path on weekly cycles during one year. This is done by setting a pre-treatment Hamilton Anxiety Scale score and projecting the weekly impact of the pharmacotherapy on this score. The model uses clinical data from an 8-week flexible dose direct comparison clinical trial between the two drugs; utility values based on a Spanish study; and Portuguese economic data, being the resource consumption obtained via an expert panel.

Resultados (Results): Pregabalin patients benefited from 0.738 quality adjusted life years while those on venlafaxine XR achieved only 0.712. Moreover, the number of weeks with no or minimal symptoms was estimated to be 12.9 for pregabalin and 3.8 for venlafaxine XR. Those clinical gains were achieved at the expense of an extra 715€ per patient, implying an incremental cost per quality adjusted life year of 27.199€ and an incremental cost per week with no or minimal symptoms of 79€. Sensitivity analysis show that results are robust to main assumptions.

Conclusões (Conclusions): Assuming a threshold of 30.000€ per quality adjusted life year, pregabalin is cost-effective in comparison with venlafaxine XR in the treatment of generalised anxiety disorder in Portugal.