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### ABSTRACT

#### **Antipsychotic Medications: Adherence and Availability in East Jerusalem**

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**Background:** Schizophrenia is a severe illness affecting all life aspects of the patients including work, self-care and capacity to establish interpersonal relationships. It is known to affect about 1.0% of the population. Despite the fact that adherence to antipsychotic medications is the cornerstone in the treatment and prevention of relapse of the disease, non-adherence is a major problem among schizophrenia patients.

#### **Objectives:**

1. To evaluate the antipsychotic medications in East Jerusalem.
2. To illustrate the most frequently prescribed antipsychotic medications based on pharmacists' experience and knowledge.

**Methods:** A cross sectional study was done among 146 pharmacists in east Jerusalem. Google form Questionnaires were distributed electronically (English language) during March 2022. Data were analyzed using google drive version, 2022.



**Results:** According to pharmacists, the most frequently prescribed antipsychotic drug is Quetiapine (33.2%), followed by Risperidone and olanzapine at a rate of (30.8%), (30%) respectively. Haloperidol was the least prescribed. The most annoying side effect from the pharmacists' point of view is extrapyramidal and tardive dyskinesia (37.2%) followed by weight gain (33.1%) and sexual dysfunction (20.7%)

Non-adherence to antipsychotic medications was attributed mainly to: annoying side effects (33.1%), and the percentage of patients with the feeling of embarrassment (19.3%) was really surprising.

**Conclusion:** The fact that Quetiapine is the most prescribed medication, could be attributed to its' low incidence of side effects as well as its' effect on improving positive thinking, behavior and preventing severe mood swings. Haloperidol, on the other hand, has the highest incidence of side effects, which avoids its prescription.

Annoying Side effects decrease patients 'adherence to antipsychotic medications as it negatively affects daily life activities, in addition to the psychotic effect on patients' beliefs that reduces their conviction of the necessity to take the medication.

**Research Keywords:** Schizophrenia, availability and adherence, pharmacist knowledge in East Jerusalem.