National impact of a constraining regulatory framework on pregabalin dispensations in France, 2020-2022.

M. Chappuy [a, b, c], J. de Ternay [a, d], B. Rolland [a, e, f,*]

a: Service Universitaire d'Addictologie de Lyon (SUAL), Hospices Civils de Lyon, Hôpital Edouard Herriot, Lyon, France
b: CSAPA, Hospices Civils de Lyon, Hôpital de la Croix Rousse, Lyon, France
c: Service Pharmaceutique, Hospices Civils de Lyon, Lyon, France
d: Research on Healthcare Performance (RESHAPE), INSERM U1290, Hospices Civils de Lyon, Lyon, France.
e: Service Universitaire d'Addictologie de Lyon (SUAL), CH Le Vinatier, Bron, France
f: Univ. Lyon, UCBL1, INSERM U1028, CNRS UMR5292, CRNL, PSYR2, Lyon, France

*= corresponding author : Service Universitaire d'Addictologie de Lyon, Hôpital Edouard Herriot Pavillon K, 5 Place d'Arsonval, 69003 Lyon, France. Benjamin.rolland@chu-lyon.fr T : +33 4 72 11 78 52.

Abstract

Background: Pregabalin is a drug approved for neuropathic pain, epilepsy and general anxiety disorder. However, pregabalin is also an increasing cause of diversion and misuse, and, for this reason, the French health authorities have decided in 2021 to classify it as a narcotic drug, requiring secured prescription pads. Our study aimed to assess the impact of this measure on pregabalin prescription patterns.

Methods: Using data from a national representative sample of 12,690 French community pharmacies, we compared one-year pre-regulation to one-year post-regulation for the following parameters: (1) number of pregabalin prescriptions dispensed (2) co-dispensed opioids and/or benzodiazepines among people receiving pregabalin and (3) number of prescriptions exceeding the maximum recommended dosage of 600 mg per day.

Results: Following the regulatory change, there was a 22.7% reduction in the number of pregabalin dispensations. Concurrently, there was a significant decrease in co-dispensed prescriptions of opioids (18.4% versus 11.6%, $p<0.001$) and benzodiazepines (21.4% versus 11.7%, $p<0.001$). Prescriptions exceeding the maximum recommended dosage during the study period dropped from 10.6% before to 2.5% after the regulatory change.

Conclusion: The constraining regulation adopted in 2021 by the French health authorities significantly curtailed total pregabalin dispensation in community pharmacies, including high-dose prescriptions.

Liens d’intérêt : aucun en lien avec ce travail.