



# Antidepressant and anxiolytic consumption during COVID-19 pandemic



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## Introduction

- ❖ Risks to mental health among healthcare professionals:
  - ❖ Overtime work
  - ❖ Exhaustion
  - ❖ Near death experience
- ❖ Anxiety and depression factors during the COVID-19 pandemic:
  - ❖ Fear of infecting ourselves or our loved ones
  - ❖ Social isolation
  - ❖ Work from home
  - ❖ Loneliness
  - ❖ Financial instability
- ❖ The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on antidepressant and anxiolytic medication consumption in local pharmacy in Kumanovo.

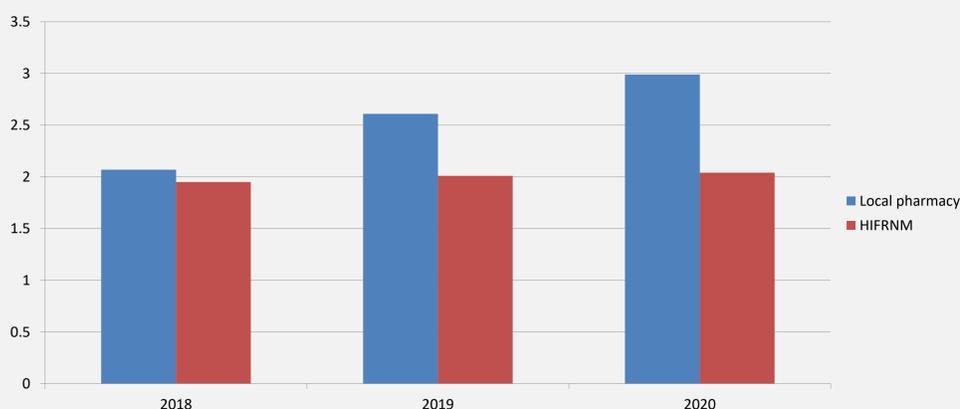
## Materials and methods

The data for antidepressant (amitriptyline, fluoxetine, paroxetine, sertraline and venlafaxine) and anxiolytic (diazepam, bromazepam and alprazolam) medication consumption at the expense of health insurance of Republic of North Macedonia for three year i.e., 2018-2020, was collected in local pharmacy in Kumanovo.

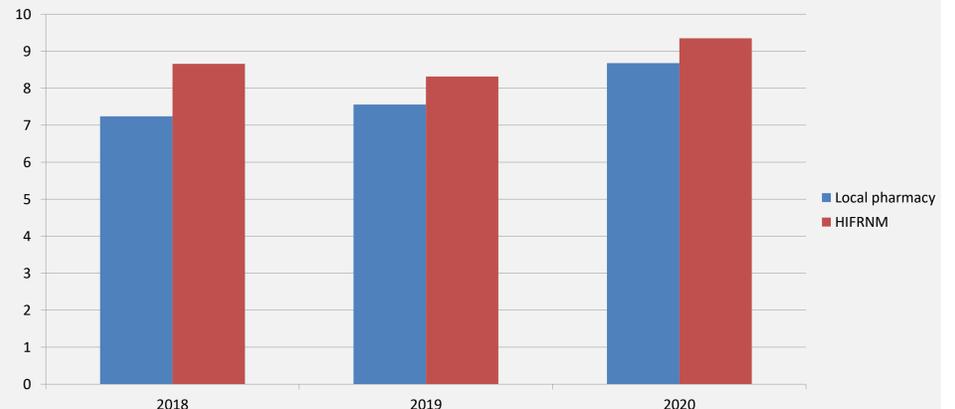
The percentage representation for each group of drugs was calculated in relation of total number of issued drugs for each year.

The obtained results were compared with the data from the annual reports on drug consumption from the Health Insurance Fond Republic of North Macedonia (HIFRNM).

## Results



**Figure 1.** Percentage representation of antidepressant medication consumption per year.



**Figure 2.** Percentage representation of anxiolytic medication consumption per year.

## Discussion

- ❖ Pearson et al. (1) during SARS epidemic in 2003 and Shultz et al. (2) during Ebola epidemic in 2014 confirmed their impact on the mental health.
- ❖ According to the scientific brief released by WHO (3) in the first year of COVID-19 pandemic, global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased by 25%.



- ❖ Increased global prevalence of anxiety and depression during COVID-19 pandemic that is not reflected by increased number of patients receiving antidepressant therapy in RNM is indicative that the mental health of many patients is neglected.
- ❖ Interventions should be made to start managing mental health problems while they are at an early stage, which will contribute to easier and faster healing.

## Conclusion

The impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is going to leave on the mental health is undoubted, thus awareness of its importance should be raised. Patients should be advised to seek help and, if necessary, to be encouraged to start antidepressant therapy. Family doctors, specialists and pharmacists should work as a team for early detection and treatment of mental conditions.

## References

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