

## ZOLPIDEM-INDUCED GALACTORRHEA VIA GABAERGIC INHIBITION OF DOPAMINE: A CASE REPORT

*D. De Jesus*<sup>1</sup>, *A. Alao*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SUNY Upstate Medical University, <sup>2</sup>Polytrauma and Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Dept of Psychiatry, Syracuse, NY, USA

**Objective:** To discuss a case of zolpidem-induced galactorrhea.

**Introduction:** The prevalence of insomnia can be as high as 32 to 33%. Non-benzodiazepines (such as zolpidem) have become more commonly used to treat insomnia.

**Case report:** The patient is a 29-year-old woman with a history of (PTSD) who presented with PTSD associated insomnia. She was started on zolpidem 5 mg po qhs. Two months after the initiation of zolpidem treatment, the patient presented with breast tenderness and galactorrhea. Zolpidem was discontinued and the galactorrhea resolved after two weeks. A serum prolactin level drawn shortly after discontinuation of zolpidem was 15.67 mg/ml.

**Discussion:** Zolpidem has a high affinity at the  $\alpha 1$  containing GABAA receptors, with reduced affinity for those containing the  $\alpha 2$ - and  $\alpha 3$ - GABAA receptor subunits and minimal affinity for  $\alpha 5$  receptor subunit. Psychotropic drugs have been well recognized to produce hyperprolactinemia. However, there has been no reported case of zolpidem-induced hyperprolactinemia. Specifically, zolpidem has been noted to activate GABAergic neurons within the ventral tegmental area (VTA), where there is a sizable population of GABAergic neurons. These GABAergic neurons regulate the firing of dopaminergic counterparts, also located in the VTA, which send projections throughout the brain. This inhibition results in a decrease in the dopaminergic inhibitory influence on prolactin and an increase in prolactin releasing factors which act on the anterior pituitary, leading to hyperprolactinemia and thus galactorrhea.

**Conclusion:** Pharmacologically induced hyperprolactinemia may be a problem of underestimated prevalence due to the lack of externally visible symptoms.