

COMPARISON OF THE READABILITY LEVELS OF PACKAGE INSERTS OF COMMONLY USED ANTIDEPRESSANT AND ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS IN TURKEY

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BACKGROUND AND AIM: Patient adherence in psychiatric treatment depends on the provision of clear and comprehensible written information. Although drug package inserts are the primary written source of information for patients, complex language may negatively affect treatment adherence and patient safety. This study aimed to objectively evaluate the readability levels of package inserts of frequently prescribed antidepressant and antipsychotic medications in Türkiye using the Ateşman Readability Index.

METHODS: This cross-sectional descriptive study included 20 active substances, comprising 10 antidepressants and 10 antipsychotics commonly prescribed in Türkiye. As nationwide prescribing data were not accessible, medications were identified based on the most frequently prescribed drugs in our outpatient clinic.

For each active substance, one original product was selected. To ensure methodological standardization, 100-word text samples were extracted from the “How to Use” section of the most up-to-date patient information leaflet available on the official website of the Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency (TİTCK).

This section was chosen because it directly relates to treatment adherence and appears under a standardized heading in all inserts.

A starting sentence was determined using a random number generator, and a consecutive 100-word text segment was analyzed. Readability levels were calculated using the Ateşman Readability Index formula ($\text{Score} = 198.825 - [40.175 \times L] - [2.610 \times S]$). Ethics committee approval was not required, as only publicly available documents were analyzed.

RESULTS: The mean readability score corresponded to the “Moderate Difficulty” category. Approximately a high school level of education was required to understand both antidepressant and antipsychotic package inserts.

CONCLUSION: Consistent with studies in Turkey, findings align with research from the United Kingdom, Ireland, the United States, Iran, and Qatar using Flesch Reading Ease and Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, indicating antidepressant and antipsychotic leaflets remain difficult for lower-educated patients.

Keywords: Psychopharmacology, ateşman readability index, patient adherence