

Therapeutics Initiative

Better prescribing. Better health.

Improving your prescribing of zopiclone and trazodone for insomnia

High doses of zopiclone and trazodone are often prescribed for insomnia, potentially increasing harms without improving sleep.¹

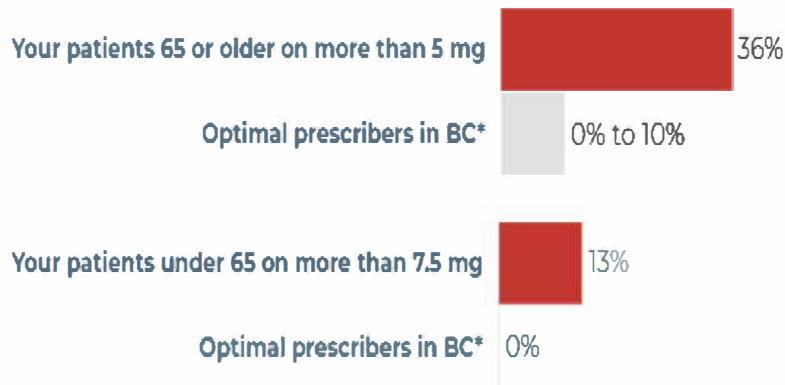
For patients taking zopiclone or trazodone for insomnia, taper to the optimal ceiling dose and introduce or facilitate consistent use of non-pharmacological treatments (e.g., sleep restriction).²

ZOPICLONE

For adults 65 years or older, start with 3.75 mg per day; do not prescribe more than 5 mg daily.

For adults under 65 years, start with 3.75 mg per day; do not prescribe more than 7.5 mg daily.

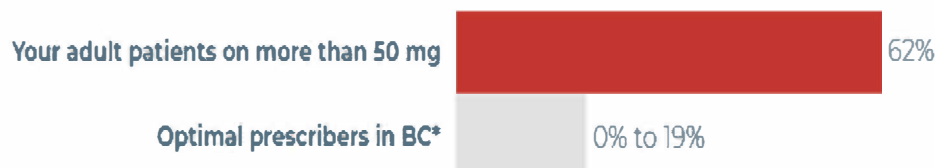
Of all your patients taking zopiclone for insomnia, below is the proportion (%) taking more than the optimal ceiling doses of zopiclone, 2022-2023.



TRAZODONE

We recommend against prescribing trazodone for insomnia.³ If you do prescribe, start with 25 mg, and do not exceed 50 mg per day.

Of all your patients taking trazodone for insomnia, below is the proportion (%) taking more than the optimal ceiling dose of trazodone, 2022-2023.



Total number of your patients taking zopiclone or trazodone for insomnia included in this Portrait = 64

* Optimal prescribers in BC are the top 15th percentile of family physicians and nurse practitioners who prescribed the evidence-based ceiling doses (or less), more often than did 85% of peers.

PLEASE NOTE: The accuracy of your prescribing Portrait is dependent on the completeness of patient visit data and the precision of diagnosis coding. The data presented reflects what clinicians *prescribed*, and may not be the dose your patient is actually taking.

REFERENCES & NOTES

1. Therapeutics Initiative. Improving how we prescribe zopiclone and trazodone for insomnia. *Therapeutics Letter*. 2025 (Aug-Sept); 158:1-4.
2. Non-pharmacological treatments such as sleep restriction and cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBT-i). See CBT-I resource: <https://mysleepwell.ca/>
3. Trazodone is not indicated in insomnia; its use for insomnia outside of mood disorders is off-label.

DATA & DEFINITIONS

Patients included: Patients aged 18 years and older at the time of their first prescription with at least one prescription for zopiclone or trazodone that was prescribed by you and filled in a community pharmacy from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2023. BC residents are those with BC MSP enrolment at any time during the study period.

Patients excluded: We excluded patients under 18 years for both medications. We also excluded trazodone users with a history of major depression (diagnosis of depression in the previous year).

Clinicians included: Family physicians and nurse practitioners (NP) registered by MSP with an active practice, or physicians registered primarily as GP-emergency medicine and FP-emergency medicine physicians who had 100 or more prescriptions (for any drug) filled at a community pharmacy in 2022 and 2023, according to PharmaCare and PharmaNet claims data.

Drugs included: Zopiclone, trazodone.



FOR DETAILED DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES SEE: WWW.TI.UBC.CA/PORTRAIT-INSOMNIA



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