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## INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

The Joint Committee for New Drugs Evaluation (JCND E) was born in 2003 with 3 Regional Drug Evaluation Centres as founder members: Andalusia, Basque Country & Catalonia. Two years later, other 2 regions joined the JCND E initiative (Navarra & Aragon). The Committee has developed common Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)<sup>1</sup> to unify criteria to develop a more efficient new drug assessment process. In fact, JCND E evaluations are relevant for other Drug Evaluation Centres and Primary Care Pharmacy Departments in several Spanish regions. Nevertheless, each individual Drug Evaluation Centre has its own new drugs therapeutic bulletins to spread therapeutic information between their health professionals. Drug comparators availability is one of the key issues for the JCND E decision algorithms (Fig.1). The objective of this study was to check and to quantify the degree of uniformity in the drugs evaluations and the degree of drug costs heterogeneity shown in the JCND E members drug therapeutic bulletins<sup>2-7</sup>.

## METHODS

New drug therapeutic bulletins of the 5 Drug Evaluation Centres members of the JCND E were reviewed from 2006 to 2009. Each new drug assessed by the JCND E was tracked to identify which members reported them in their bulletins. Comparative drugs included in the bulletins were also registered to find potential heterogeneity between the JCND E members bulletins. Daily/monthly treatment costs shown in the bulletins were also included in the study database (Fig.2).

Fig.1: Algorithm for New Drugs Therapeutic Innovation degree

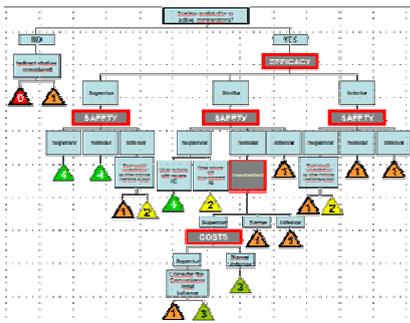


Fig.2: Drug therapeutic records of two JCND E members for the same drug (example)

## RESULTS

Fifty-seven drug evaluations were recorded during the study period (2006-09). Forty of them (70%) were published by 3 or more of the JCND E members (Table 1) in their drug therapeutic bulletins, being only 12 published by all the JCND E members. Andalusia, Basque Country and Catalonia, the JCND E founders, are the most active members of the JCND E with 12-14 new drugs per year published. In all the bulletins were identified some differences in all the comparators used for the treatment costs graphs. Andalusia and Catalonia tended to include more comparators in their drug bulletins. The highest level of heterogeneity was observed in drugs for diabetes treatment. Most of the drug costs reported were very similar. Only one disagreement between the JCND E was identified in the new drug innovation rating, which is marked in Table 1. Some examples of different drugs assessed are shown (Table 2), where the different comparators included in each drug therapeutic bulletin are registered.

Table 1: List of drugs assessed by JCND E published in ≥ 3 drug bulletins of the JCND E members

ACTIVO INNOVADOR	Tratamiento	Comparador	Indicaciones	F.A.	Basque Country	Catalonia	Andalusia	Navarra	Aragon
Exenatida	Exenatida	Exenatida	Diabetes mellitus (DM2)	A	X	X	X	X	X
...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

Table 2: Different comparators selected between the JCND E members (example)

RESERTRONOL (PROCTON)	Basque Country	Catalonia	Andalusia	Navarra	Aragon
RISERTRONATE 50	X	X	X	X	X
RISERTRONATE 100	X	X	X	X	X
...	...	...	...	...	...

In one antihypertensive drug assessment (Aliskiren), a wide variety of active comparators belonging to different drug families where found (Table 3), consequently huge drug costs differences between them where recorded in the drug bulletins. Duloxetine was evaluated twice: once in 2006 for its two first indications (neuropathic pain & depression) and the second time in 2010. In both cases, pregabalin was only included in the comparisons in the Andalusian drug bulletin, although this drug was launched in Spain in 2005 and it should have been considered as a relevant comparator for neuropathic pain & anxiety disorders (Tables 4-5).

Table 3: Aliskiren comparators selected

ALISKIREN (RASILEZ®)	Basque Country	Catalonia	Andalusia	Navarra	Aragon
IRBESARTAN	X	X	X	X	X
VALSARTAN	X	X	X	X	X
LOSARTAN	X	X	X	X	X
...	...	...	...	...	...

Table 4: Duloxetine comparators in 2006 evaluations

DULOXETINE (CYMBALTA/XERISTAR®)	Basque Country	Catalonia	Andalusia	Navarra	Aragon
GABAPENTIN	X	X	X	X	X
PREGABALIN*	X	X	X	X	X
...	...	...	...	...	...

Table 5: Duloxetine comparators in 2009 evaluation

DULOXETINE (CYMBALTA/XERISTAR®)	Basque Country	Catalonia	Andalusia	Navarra	Aragon
PAROXETIN	X	X	X	X	X
VENLAFAXIN	X	X	X	X	X
...	...	...	...	...	...

## CONCLUSIONS

The JCND E has made several advances in identifying new drug assessment. Nevertheless, health-economics arguments are still focused on the drug treatment cost comparisons. The comparators found in the drug bulletins are slightly different between the regions. Some additional efforts in this way should be done by the JCND E in the future to minimize confusions between the information supplied to the health professionals from their Regional Health System about the new drugs available to be prescribed.

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3. CEVIME-MEZ. Centro Vasco de Información de Medicamentos. Dpto. Sanidad. Gobierno vasco  
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7. Catalán A et al. FAP 2006; vol. 4: 7-17.