

## CLINICAL PRESENTATION

- Octogenarian patient presented with aggravation of anxiety symptoms
- Trigger: ophthalmological surgery
- Progressive augmentation of alprazolam (from 0 to 0.75 mg daily)
- Visit in the psychiatric emergency room
- **Abrupt interruption of alprazolam and switch for clomethiazole**
- Abrupt worsening of anxiety symptoms and withdrawal symptoms
- Appearance of new symptom: **increased sexual function**
- Improvement of anxiety and withdrawal symptoms after resumption of alprazolam
- Remaining of increased sexual function even after resumption of alprazolam
- Disappearance of increased sexual function after interruption of clomethiazole
- Diagnosis of major depressive episode of moderate severity
- Introduction of trazodone and further increase up to 150 mg daily
- Psychogeriatric hospitalization due to important anxiety symptoms
- Trazodone-related hyponatremia suspected, replacement by mirtazapine 30 mg
- Improvement of anxiety and insomnia symptoms
- Progressive reduction and further interruption of alprazolam
- No increase in sexual function after interruption of clomethiazole nor alprazolam

## WHAT IS CLOMETHIAZOLE

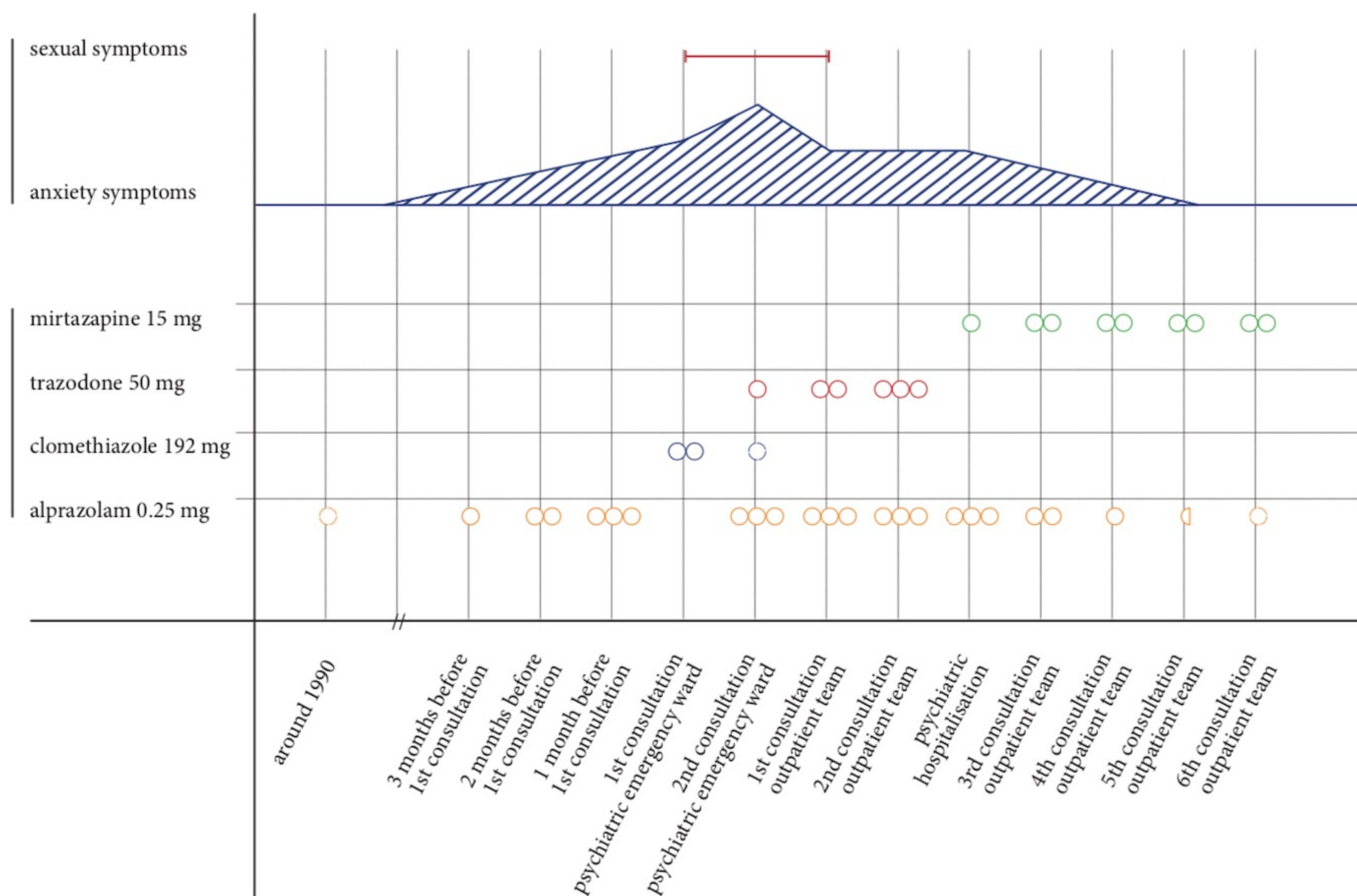
- Widely prescribed in French-speaking Switzerland
- Rarely prescribed elsewhere
- Sedative-hypnotic, short-acting, anticonvulsant properties
- Structurally close to thiazole component of Vit B1
- Mechanism of action similar to barbiturates
- Treatment of anxiety and insomnia in the elderly

## DISCUSSION

- Difficult to establish association between drug use and adverse drug reaction (ADR)
- Temporal pattern regarding medication seen as a relevant factor
- In our case:
  - The patient had not taken clomethiazole any time before
  - Increased sexual function appeared right after introduction of clomethiazole
  - Increased sexual function did not improve after resumption of alprazolam
  - Increased sexual function disappeared after interruption of clomethiazole
- However:
  - Alprazolam was interrupted around the same time as the ADR appeared
  - Increased sexual function is not typical of withdrawal syndrome, but has been described
  - Increased sexual function has not yet been described as a possible ADR for clomethiazole
  - Possible ADR include paradoxical excitation and confusion

## CONCLUSION

- Increased sexual function was likely an ADR of clomethiazole
- However, association with alprazolam interruption cannot be excluded



**Figure 1.** Clinical timeline illustrating the evolution of the patient's anxiety and sexual symptoms and correlating the progression of those with the medication that she was taking at each timepoint.

- *Pro re nata* prescription of the corresponding drug
- ◐ Prescription of half the dose of the corresponding drug
- Prescription of a full dose of the corresponding drug (two or three symbols indicate twice or thrice the dose respectively)
- Appearance of sexual symptoms in a dichotomic way (presence or absence)
- ▨ Appearance of anxiety symptoms and severity (according to the subjective experience of the patient)