

24th Scientific Symposium of the Austrian Pharmacological Society Graz, 27–28 September 2018

MEETING ABSTRACT

A5.4

Patient opinion and knowledge on drug use: a pilot study

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Background: Although more and more drugs become available every day, success of pharmacotherapy can be insufficient. Some of the reasons certainly are poor compliance and adherence due to inadequate patient–doctor communication which results in inadequate use of drugs and insufficient knowledge about drugs used. Also, there is a growing trend of self-medication. The aim of this research was to determine which groups of drugs are most frequently distributed in both public and private pharmacies, as well as to determine opinion and knowledge of the patients about drugs they use.

Methods: Research was done during a 1-month period in 5 private and 5 public pharmacies in Novi Sad, Serbia. Participants were interviewed about treatment, doses, dosing intervals, side effects and possible interactions. Patients were interviewed just after drug distribution.

Results: The total number of patients interviewed was 1,894 (956 in public and 938 in private pharmacies). The majority of patients were with prescribed treatment (89% in public, and 72% in private pharmacies). The structure of drugs distributed in both private and public pharmacies was very similar. Most frequently distributed groups of drugs were: ATC group C: drugs for treatment of cardiovascular disorders (~ 40%); ATC group N: drugs for treatment of nervous system disorders (~ 22%); ATC group A: drugs for treatment of alimentary tract disorders (~ 11%). Knowledge on route of administration, prescribed doses and dosing interval seems to be satisfactory. The majority of patients (88% in public, and 84% in private pharmacies) were properly informed on prescribed doses and dosing intervals. The main obstacle in proper drug use in patients is insufficient knowledge about side effects and possible drug interactions. A very small number of patients (approximately 25% of patients in both public and private pharmacies were informed on possible side effects) while an even lower number was informed on possible interactions (less than 10%).

Discussion: According to the results of the study it is obvious that little attention is paid on informing patients about side effects and drug interactions. A certain number of patients will be discouraged to continue treatment when facing unfamiliar side effects. Inadequate drug combinations, and drug–food interactions can lead to pharmacodynamic and pharmacokinetic interactions leading to more frequent side effects and insufficient therapeutic response.

Acknowledgements: This work was supported by the Ministry of Science and Technological Development, Republic of Serbia (grant no. III41012) and by the Provincial Secretariat for Science and Technological Development, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina (grant no. 142-451-3630/2017-01/01).

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