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MEETING ABSTRACT

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Interprofessional pharmacology workshop: intervention to close the gap between physicians' and pharmacists' attitudes toward their mutual collaboration

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Background: The aging societies, the increasing number of new drugs on the market and widespread consumption of OTC drugs are leading to a higher incidence of drug interactions and reduced compliance of patients. Better collaboration between health-care professionals has been recognized as both a reasonable and effective strategy in reducing this unwanted process. Previous studies have shown that physicians have a significantly less positive attitude toward interdisciplinary collaboration than pharmacists. Therefore, the aim of the present study was to close the gap between physicians' and pharmacists' attitudes toward their mutual collaboration by organizing an interprofessional pharmacology workshop.

Methods: The three-hour workshop was organized at the University of Dubrovnik as a form of a continuous, lifelong learning workshop. Participants were physicians ($n = 18$) and pharmacists ($n = 23$). Three complex clinical cases were presented to health-care professionals during the workshop: hypertension, asthma and metabolic syndrome. Each participant had to identify drug-related problems (DRP) and suggest the changes of pharmacotherapy and lifestyle in order to achieve the desired therapeutic goal for patients described in the clinical cases. There were three groups of information about each clinical case: (i) general information that was available to all participants, (ii) specific information available only to physicians (clinical guidelines, physiological measurements, laboratory values, etc.), and (iii) specific information available only to pharmacists (OTC and phytomedicine intake, drug compliance, lifestyle, etc.). Participants were not allowed to exchange their specific information in the first case. After they solved the first case independently, they realized that limitations of available information, due to lack of interprofessional collaboration resulted in limited identification of DRPs and misjudged actions for achieving the therapeutic goal. Therefore, participants spontaneously engaged to collaborate in order to detect all DRPs and to achieve the therapeutic goal for the other two patients. To determine attitudes toward collaboration, participants had to complete a validated questionnaire ("Scale of Attitudes Toward Collaboration Between Pharmacists and Physicians", SATCP²) at the beginning and at the end of the workshop. The total SATCP² score (TS) was calculated and data are expressed as mean \pm SD. The data were analyzed by non-parametric statistical tests and the results were considered statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Pharmacists showed a more positive attitude toward collaboration than physicians before the workshop (52.1 ± 4.1 vs. 48.3 ± 3.9). However, the attitude of physicians increased significantly after the workshop (52.1 ± 6.1 vs. 48.3 ± 3.9) and reached the values of pharmacists' attitude after the workshop (52.4 ± 5.2).

Discussion: The interprofessional pharmacology workshop successfully closed the gap between physicians' and pharmacists' attitudes toward their mutual collaboration. It seems that interprofessional workshops represent an efficient approach in promoting collaboration between health care professionals.

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