RESULTS

- 154 medical practitioners answered the questionnaire, obtaining a response rate of 41%.
- Pharmacists are regarded as being competent to treat common infections by 8% of practitioners, 37% have no opinion and 14% think pharmacists are not competent at all.
- Fusidic acid (24%) is perceived by medical practitioners as the most appropriate topical antibiotic to be prescribed by pharmacists (Figure 1).
- The majority of respondents (68%) do not agree that pharmacists are given prescribing rights.
- Reasons given are that pharmacists are not qualified to clinically examine patients (78%), pharmacists do not have access to patient medical records (60%) and lack of privacy in local pharmacies (49%).

AIMS

To assess prescribing practices by physicians and to describe their perception on competencies of pharmacist prescribing and risks associated by such prescribing.

METHOD

- A questionnaire to study medical practitioners’ perceptions on antibiotic prescribing by pharmacists and to establish pharmacists’ contribution in prescribing and dispensing antibiotics was developed.
- The questionnaire was validated using the Delphi technique and disseminated to 376 medical practitioners practising in primary and secondary care in Malta.
- Questions asked include rating pharmacists’ competence to prescribe broad-spectrum antibiotics to treat common infections on a 5-point Likert scale.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that a number of medical practitioners do not have an opinion on pharmacist prescribing antibiotics. Relevant patient risks if prescribing is undertaken by the pharmacist as opposed to other prescribers are not clearly outlined by evidence-based justifications.

References