

# Community Pharmacist Intervention in the Management of Older Persons

Rebecca Zammit, Francesca Wirth, Lillian M Azzopardi

Department of Pharmacy, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Malta, Msida, Malta

email: Rebecca.zammit.13@um.edu.mt

## INTRODUCTION

The pharmacist plays a vital role in safeguarding the community with extensive knowledge on pharmacotherapy. The pharmacist aims at providing services on safe medication use and lifestyle promotion which will provide better care for the growing elderly population.

## AIMS

- To evaluate pharmacist intervention in the management of elderly persons.
- To identify the needs of older persons in the community.

## METHOD

- This cross-sectional study is based on community pharmacies where on-site observational studies were initially carried out.
- By merging the literature obtained through the literature review and the observational studies, a questionnaire addressing the needs of the elderly was developed.
- The questionnaire was divided into two; patient demographics and patient perspective.
- The Maltese districts were analysed for statistical purposes and five localities were identified by convenience sampling.
- A small scale study was initially performed to pilot the questionnaire.
- Subsequently, twenty patients per pharmacy were interviewed (N=100), all results were analysed from which models were later proposed.

## RESULTS

### Demographics (N=100)

- From 100 patients, 52% were female and 48% were male.
- The mean age of the patients interviewed was that of 70.4 years.
- From the patients interviewed 80% suffer from hypertension, 31% suffer from diabetes and 54% suffer from hypercholesterolemia amongst other diseases.

Frequency of visits to the Pharmacy.

More than once a week – N =15
Weekly – N =22
Monthly – N =27
More than once a month but not weekly – N =35
Do not know – N =1

Number of different medication taken daily.

1 – N =8
2-3 – N =32
4-5 – N =23
6-9 – N =23
10 or More – N =10
Do not know – N =4

### Patient Perspective

- Forty-nine percent of patients find it difficult to follow or remember what the pharmacist has said and only 6% have had a medication review performed.
- Common difficulties expressed by the patients were that of accessing a pharmacy with 39.2%, 29.4% find the dosage regimen difficult and the highest percentage of 74.5% of patients finding packaging a difficulty.

Do you take your medication alone?

Yes – N=94, No – N=6
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Do you find it difficult to follow pharmacist recommendations?

Yes – N=49, No – N=51
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Have you ever had a pharmacist-led medication review performed?

Yes – N=6, No – N=94
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Are you aware of the indications for which you are taking your medication?

Yes – N=89, No – N=11
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Do you feel confident that you are taking your medication correctly?

Yes – N=64, No – N=36
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## CONCLUSION

The study highlights the challenges faced by older persons. The most common difficulty cited was with regards to packaging, especially package changes due to generic substitution effected for chronic medication dispensed on the free national health care services scheme. Pharmacists need to provide specific support to the patients when there is packaging change especially for older persons.