



## INTRODUCTION

Pharmacist interventions in patient care has evolved from a focus on dispensing medications to a focus on seamless patient care.<sup>1-2</sup> In some countries, such as United Kingdom, the pharmacist's intervention is expanding beyond providing evidence-based practice and includes prescribing.<sup>3</sup>

## AIM

To develop and validate a self-administered questionnaire (APQ<sub>Public</sub>) to assess the general public's perception regarding the risks of potential antibiotic prescribing by pharmacists

## METHOD

- The developed questionnaire (APQ<sub>Public</sub>) was validated using a two-round Delphi method over a period of three weeks.
- The validation panel consisted of 6 individuals; 2 general practitioners, 2 pharmacists and 2 lay people.
- Ethics approval was granted by the University of Malta Research Ethics Committee.
- The developed questionnaire consisted of two sections:
  - Section 1: Demographic Data
  - Section 2: Public Perception of Antibiotic Prescribing by Pharmacists
- APQ<sub>Public</sub> was disseminated to the general public in pharmacies and public areas across the five districts in Malta. Public areas included shopping malls and popular shopping streets. Recruitment was done over a 6-week period.
- Patients were asked to complete the questionnaire and to post in a box, prepared by the researcher, to maintain anonymity at all times.
- Pharmacies were chosen by convenience sampling.
- Statistical analysis was undertaken using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences® (SPSS®) version 23.

## RESULTS

- A total of 389 individuals over 18 years of age participated in this study.
- 57% (n=222) were female, 30% (n=116) lived in the northern harbour region of the island of Malta and 35% (n=137) had a tertiary level of education.
- 42% (n=165) claimed to visit same pharmacist often.
- Female participants (p<0.001) and the older generation (p<0.001) tend to visit the same pharmacist more often than males and the younger generation respectively.
- 84% (n=326) claimed they always finish a given antibiotic treatment course.
- 40% (n=156) felt very confident about their pharmacist prescribing a limited number of antibiotics and 58% (n=225) did not think there was a risk in potential antibiotic prescribing by pharmacists.
- Participants who visit the same pharmacist feel increasingly confident about their pharmacist prescribing antibiotics (p=0.002).
- Participants recruited from pharmacies had more confidence in pharmacists prescribing (p<0.001), perceived a lower risk in pharmacists prescribing (p=0.007), had a higher level of comfort in discussing health issues with a pharmacist (p<0.001) and preferred consulting the pharmacist regarding first symptoms of an illness (p=0.001) than those from the general public.

## CONCLUSION

Pharmacists are in an ideal position to educate the general public about the appropriate use of antibiotics since participants had an overall positive perception of the pharmacist and the pharmacist's competences.

### References

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2. Vella M, Grima M, Wirth F, Attard Pizzuto M, Sammut Bartolo N, Vella J et al. Consumer perception of community pharmacist extended professional services. *J Pharm Health Serv Res* 2015;6(2):91-6.
3. Tonna AP, Stewart D, West B, McCraig D. Pharmacist prescribing in the UK - a literature review of current practice and research. *J Clin Pharm Tech* 2007; 32(6):545-6.