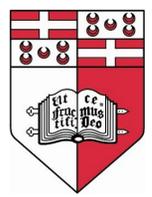


Dissemination of protocols for the management of gastro-intestinal disorders

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Introduction

The study focuses on the modification of previously locally developed protocols¹ which aid pharmacists' diagnosis and management of upper gastro-intestinal disorders; pharmacist's compliance to the guidelines and their dissemination to community pharmacists.

Aim

To update previous protocols for gastro-intestinal disorders and compile them into a protocol booklet to be disseminated to community pharmacists, to assess compliance with the protocols and overall applicability.

Setting

Community pharmacies in Malta (n=208).

Method

1. The original protocols for the management of dyspepsia, reflux and peptic ulcer disease, were updated and validated by a gastroenterologist, 2 general practitioners, 2 community pharmacists and a hospital pharmacist.
2. The validated protocols and information sections created were compiled into a protocol booklet (Figure 1.) and disseminated to community pharmacists (n=208) along with an evaluation tool to analyse pharmacist perception of the protocols.
3. Compliance to the guidelines was assessed via case studies in 10 community pharmacies chosen through stratified random sampling. Pharmacists were asked to report their intervention on the case studies presented before and after protocol dissemination.

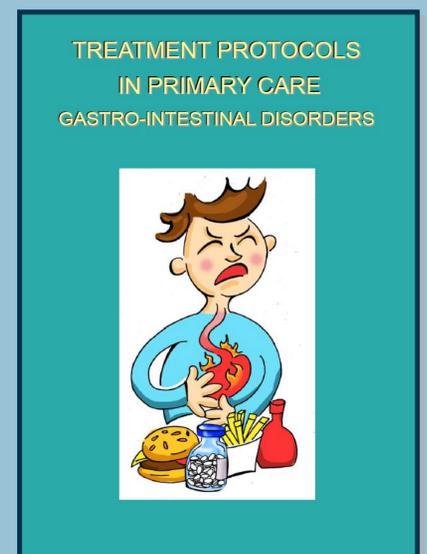


Figure 1. The protocol booklet

Available online: www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/132410/Treatment_Protocols_in_Primary_care_Gastro-intestinal_disorders.pdf

Results

- 128 out of 208 pharmacist questionnaires were returned resulting in a 61.5% response rate.
- 80% of respondents agreed that the protocols were of a satisfactory standard.
- The protocols in booklet form were considered practical for use in community pharmacies by 57.8% of pharmacists.
- Overall mean percentage compliance improved by 19.7% following protocol implementation. The P-value of 0.00 shows that this increase was significant.

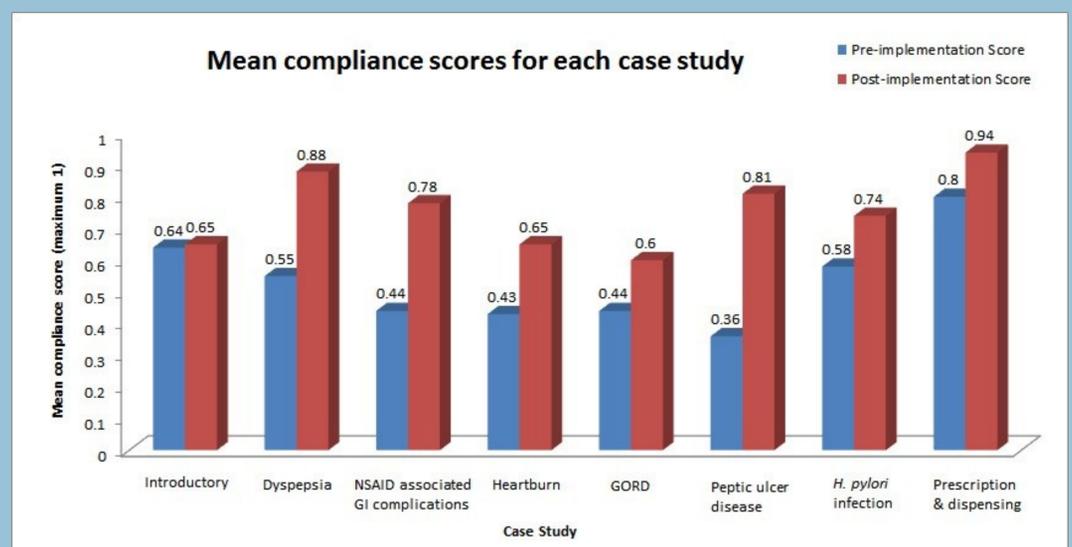


Figure 2. Bar chart showing the increase in mean compliance scores before and after protocol implementation for each case study.

Conclusion

Dissemination served to make pharmacists more aware of the latest trends and advice related to the treatment of upper gastro-intestinal disorders. The improvement in compliance to the guidelines shows the importance of developing protocols since they contribute to improving standards in patient care.

Reference

1. Ellul S. Treatment Protocols for Disorders of the Gastro-Intestinal Tract [project]. Msida (Malta): Department of Pharmacy, University of Malta.; 2009.