

EVALUATION OF MEDICATION COMPREHENSION AND LITERACY IN HOSPITALIZED ORTHOPEDIC PATIENTS

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Background: Patients' ability to understand and apply medicines information is a prerequisite for optimal and safe use of medicines. Patients should be able to know and understand basic medicines information, either written or verbal, and calculate the prescribed dose in order to avoid health risks associated with the use of medicines.

Methods and Objectives: The objective of the study was to evaluate medication literacy (knowledge, understanding and numerical skills regarding the use of medicines) in hospitalized orthopedic patients. A prospective, cross-sectional study was conducted at 2 orthopedic hospitals in Belgrade, Serbia, between September 2021 and February 2022, using medication literacy questionnaire.

Results: Among 210 eligible patients, 53.3% were male, with more than 12 years of education (58.6%), who described their health (57.6%) and financial status (66.2%) as average. Most patients understood storage information (80%) and drug-food interactions (82%) in patient information leaflet (PIL). Nearly all patients (94%) understood instructions on medicine label. However, only 23.8% patients could properly interpret shelf life printed on the package. When it comes to verbal information given by pharmacist, most patients understood instructions on drug-food interactions (87%) and the use of antibiotics (78%). More than half patients (55.2%) knew that expired medicines should be returned to community pharmacy for safe disposal. In the case of missed dose, only 45% patients knew they should wait to take the next dose at the scheduled time. Regarding numerical skills, most patients could calculate maximum daily dose (86%), as well as maximum therapeutic dose (85%).

Conclusions: The study indicates that written medicines information in combination with verbal instructions have proven to be understandable for most patients, but highlights a lack of sufficient knowledge regarding the proper disposal of expired medicines and missed dose. Assessment of medication literacy is a crucial for implementation of medication adherence intervention and health risks prevention.

Keywords: Health Risks Prevention, medication literacy, pharmacotherapy literacy, written instructions, verbal instructions