Evaluating and improving the quality of information for patients

HP0032 PROBLEMS REPORTED BY PERSONS WITH RHEUMATIC DISEASES

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Background Since 1991, Apoteket AB (the national corporation of Swedish pharmacies) has conducted so called "theme years", focusing on one widespread disease each year, in order to improve drug use. In 2002, Swedish pharmacies will pay special attention to persons with Rheumatic disorders. To prepare for this, we wanted to learn more about the problems associated with these diseases.

Objectives In order to identify disease-related difficulties in this group of patients, a Problem Detection Study (PDS) was performed. A PDS study not only identifies problems, it also ranks the problems according to how troublesome the patients find them.

Methods Initially, interviews with individuals and groups of patients were performed in order to identify all problems. This qualitative step identified 116 different problems. A questionnaire based on the problems was distributed to 950 patients in Sweden. The patients were to give each problem a grade, from 0 (no problem at all) to 3 (large problem). The average grade for each problem was calculated and a list of all problems, ranked by their average grade, was generated. The problem with the highest average was the worst one.

Results 75% of the 950 patients included answered the questionnaire. This large response rate may be due to an eager among these patients to improve their situation. Problems regarding everyday life were found most troublesome. The largest problem was "It is frustrating that I'm unable to do everything I wish to, due to my RD". The average grade for this problem was 2,5, which is very high compared to results from similar studies on other groups. The top 50 problems were further analysed, and divided into six categories. Many large problems were connected to everyday life. Problems regarding understanding, from others and from the community, were also important, as well as problems concerning the use of drugs and lack of information. The five subgroups, RA, Arthritis, SLE, Mb Bechterew, Fibromyalgia had very similar experiences, although the latter group differed to some extent.

Conclusions These results are important in several ways. First, they indicate what measures pharmacists can take to solve some of these problems. For instance by counselling in the pharmacies or by information to relatives and others close to the patients. Second, the results will help pharmacists understand these patients better and thereby improve their ability to meet the patients professionally. The study is also of great value in the production of material for continuing education of the Swedish pharmacists.

SP0177 PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION – HOW PATIENT AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS ARE WORKING TOGETHER IN THE UK

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Background With the advent of patient empowerment and self-management, it is more important than ever that people with arthritis/rheumatism and those who treat them understand each others' needs and are able to work together. National organisations of patients and professionals have an important role to play in promoting partnership and mutual understanding.

BLAR is an umbrella group which brings patient and professional organisations together to work for better services for people with arthritis/rheumatism in the UK. We have 23 Member organisations. We promote partnership and communication at a local and national level through a number of ways, for example: A multi-disciplinary project to agree and audit patient-centred standards of care.

Establishing local networks of service users, health professionals and patient groups.

Joint parliamentary lobbying for higher priority for arthritis/rheumatism.

Joint policy development on issues of mutual concern.

Workshops and meetings for service users and professionals to exchange information and best practice.

Results These projects have been very successful, and have demonstrated that partnership can be beneficial to both patient and professional organisations. We have also learned that by working together, we strengthen our voice. Partnership is not possible on every issue, and there will always be differences of opinion. However, we have succeeded in building lasting partnerships on key issues.

Health professional and education

HP0033 DEVELOPMENT OF A SYSTEM OF NETWORKS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR PHYSICAL THERAPISTS REGARDING THE TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH RHEUMATIC DISEASES: THE FYRANET PROJECT

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Objectives It has been observed by physical therapists and patients that treatment of patients with rheumatic diseases by physical therapists is hampered by a lack of specific knowledge and technical and communicative skills. Moreover, co-ordination between different health professionals involved in the treatment has been perceived as not optimal. Aim of the study was to set up a system of continuous improvement of specific knowledge and skills regarding the physiotherapeutic treatment of patients with rheumatic diseases and to start networks of physical therapists working in primary care, hospitals and rehabilitation centres.