PRELIMINARY DESIGN OF HOSPITAL TELEPHARMACY

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Background

Due to the economic crisis many hospitals in our country, especially those located in remote areas and the islands, have limited hospital pharmacists’ coverage

- one hospital pharmacist per hospital

Telepharmacy addresses pharmacists’ shortages in rural areas

Aim and objectives

The Panhellenic Association of Hospital Pharmacists (P.E.F.N.I.) is promoting the creation of a pilot network, in order to ensure that inexperienced hospital pharmacists working in small rural hospitals are sufficiently supported and educated by their experienced colleagues

Materials and Methods

Two inexperienced hospital pharmacists interacted on daily basis with three experienced colleagues employed in tertiary hospitals, analyzing administrative duties and sharing best practice approaches for a period of one year, so as to establish a common working framework

The methods of communication included:
• calls
• teleconference/video calls
• emails

The experienced hospital pharmacists were available for immediate contact

Results

During one year, 672 communications via phone or email (regarding 168 problems, average 4 communications per problem) have been recorded for both rural hospitals

Twice monthly, a scheduled teleconference/video call was conducted to stabilize the procedures and check the follow up of the intervention.

21 video calls were conducted in total

Problems were categorized to 4 main fields:
1. Pharmacy Management (38%)
   e.g. daily practice, shortages, procurement, IT problems
2. Administrative Issues (28%)
3. Scientific Issues (23%)
   e.g. pharmacovigilance, antibiotic stewardship, risk assessment and safety problems
4. Patients’ and healthcare professionals (HCPs)’ education and consultation (13%)

168 problems discussed
- 106 (63%) were successfully solved
- 43 (26%) are still ongoing but positively progressing
- 19 (12%) remain unsolved and difficult to overcome, as they may demand consent of other HCPs, hospital manager, and/or Ministry of Health

The study interviewees completed questionnaires every 3 months, assessing the following indexes:
- response time (reduced)
- percentage of solved problems (increased, mostly for the ones of the first 2 categories)
- experienced stress at workplace (reduced)

Conclusion and relevance

- Telepharmacy may allow hospital pharmacists of smaller hospitals learn and benefit from experienced colleagues
- Following these results, a broader plan for hospital telepharmacy should be designed and supported by national authorities

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