PATIENT PERCEPTIONS OF GENERIC MEDICINES
20 years after the right of substitution by pharmacists

VERGANO MARION & BADIBOUDI FERDINAND
PHARMACIE - GHPSO BOULEVARD LAENNEC, 60109 CREIL - FRANCE

BACKGROUND

Global healthcare expenditure is increasing steadily and generic medicine utilization is often encouraged as a cost-containment measure. In France, since 1999, pharmacists are authorized to substitute the original medicine with a generic product, provided that the patient agrees and the doctor has not excluded by the writing of handwritten words “not substitutable” on the prescription. The success of generics depends on the geographical propensity of the patient to accept substitution.

Survey from April to June 30, 2019:
- Sample of people representative of French population:
  - Age 18 and over,
  - Online questionnaire using the Covi system (Computer Assisted Web Interview),
  - Paper format questionnaire.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of the work was to determine the patient’s perception of generic drugs 20 years after the substitution right granted to pharmacists.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Questionnaire:
- 17 questions,
- Questionnaire validation:
  - Sample of 20 randomly selected people,
  - Feedback received helping to adjust the questionnaire before the survey being conducted.

RESULTS

picture 1: profile patient

picture 2: confidence in generic medicines
Do you trust generic drugs?

picture 3: effectiveness of generic medicines
What do you think about the effectiveness of generic drugs?

picture 4: side effects of generic medicines
What do you think about the side effects of generic drugs?

picture 5: acceptance of generic drugs substitution
Choice of generic drugs?

picture 6: information about generic medicines
Do you feel that you are sufficiently informed about generic drugs?

We collected 462 questionnaires (264 paper questionnaires and 198 online questionnaires). 49% were women. 42% of patients reported high confidence in generic drugs and 73% said generic drugs are as effective as brand-name drugs. 45.6% freely choose generics. 37% of patients accept consecutively the generic substitution if it was proposed by the pharmacist (vs. 49.7% survey [Donnet - Indexa 2000]). 74% and generic drugs have as many side effects as brand-name drugs. 35% of patients reported that generic drugs have more side effects and 4% report the opposite. 12% of patients said they were asking for “not substitutable” on their prescription (vs. 20.3% survey [Urbain 1, Indexa 2000]). In 24% of cases, this statement “not substitutable” was a doctor’s decision. 1% of patients reported not knowing generic drugs. People feel that they are not sufficiently informed about generic drugs (70% by doctor, 48% by pharmacists and 87% by health Minister).

DISCUSSION

about generic medicines

You have been prescribed a generic medicine.
Here’s some information.

What is a generic medicine?

A generic medicine is like a brand-name medicine, it is a drug that works in the same way, but is produced by another company. It is less expensive than the original medicine.

How do I know?

The pharmacist will tell you if the generic medicine is appropriate for your prescription. It is less expensive than the original medicine, but it is not a different medicine.

Comparison and differences

A generic medicine is exactly the same as the original medicine. It is not a different medicine. However, it may have different packaging and different colors.

Is the name the same?

The name of the generic medicine may be different. It is not a different medicine, but it may have a different name. It is less expensive than the original medicine.

Adverse effects

The generic medicine may have different adverse effects than the original medicine, but it is not a different medicine. It is less expensive than the original medicine.

Is a new medicine different?

The generic medicine may be different from the original medicine. It is not a different medicine, but it may have different ingredients.

CONCLUSION

In our study, 45.6% of the general public freely choose generic drugs. This percentage reaches 57% when generic drugs are offered by pharmacists. Lack of knowledge about generic drugs affects patients’ perception over generic medicines. To overcome this lack of confidence, we have developed an information leaflet on generic medicines. This information is intended to reassure patients to the generic.