

MEETING ABSTRACT

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Use of OTC-drugs prior to Hospitalization

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Background

Use of over the counter (OTC)-drugs is increasing and as it is poorly registered, this can lead to complications. The most commonly used OTC-drugs are analgesics and use is highest among elderly. Our study investigates the use of OTC-drugs 24 hours prior to hospitalization as well as the effect of the drugs.

Methods

The junior physicians on call interviewed all patients admitted to the medical admission unit at Sydvestjysk Sygehus in Esbjerg on the use of OTC-drugs, using a modified chart template designed for the purpose. All adult patients aged 15 and older admitted over a two week period in August 2012 were included. The patients were asked about the drugs taken, dosage, indication and effect. OTC-drugs were categorised based on ATC-codes.

Results

From a total of 349 admissions 188 usable chart templates were registered (54%) and information on OTC usage was registered on 165 of these (88%). The patients were elderly (median: 70 years) and 43 reported an intake of OTC-drugs (26%). A total of 22 different OTC-drugs had been consumed with analgesics being the most widely used (74%). The majority of patients had taken the drugs on a relevant indication (88%), the most common indication being pain. Half the patients had taken the drugs in a relevant dosage (51%). Sixty percent felt an effect of the intake and the majority on pain symptoms.

Conclusion

Our findings reveal that one in four patients use OTC-drugs 24 hours prior to hospitalization. Most patients use OTC-drugs relevantly and half with a positive effect. The intake is poorly registered, and there is a need for more focus on the intake of OTC-drugs to avoid potential side-effects and medicine-interactions due to this increasing intake.

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