

IMPROVING TREATMENT COMPLIANCE IN THE ELDERLY

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TOPIC

Pharmacoepidemiology and Public Health

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Elderly patients often suffer from cognitive decline, and errors in compliance may arise from forgetfulness or mistakes that are caused by poor understanding, great complexity of the treatment, poor dosage forms or inappropriate packaging.

We aimed to evaluate if the use of a calendar/time-table blister package filled by the pharmacist improved compliance with prescribed treatments in hypertensive elderly patients in polypharmacy

DESIGN

We evaluated compliance with the prescribed treatment, before and after the use of a calendar/time-table blister package filled by the pharmacist, in 10 hypertensive individuals aged 65 years and over, being treated with at least 3 different drugs, selected at the Marro pharmacy from a group of patients already involved in a pharmaceutical care program.

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

Before blister packages were used compliance was evaluated through the proportion of prescribed pills that were withdrawn from the pharmacy in a given period, depending on the availability of the pharmacy records, expressed as the proportion of necessary pills acquired. During the use of the blister package (12 weeks), compliance was evaluated through the counting of pills left on the blister, and was expressed as the proportion of discarded pills.

Blood pressure was measured before and after the intervention.

RESULTS

Compliance was higher when patients used the blister package (99.7% vs 79%, $p < 0.05$). Mean systolic blood pressure decreased from 152 to 143 mmHg ($p > 0.05$) and Diastolic blood pressure decreased from 83 to 78 mmHg ($p > 0.05$).

CONCLUSIONS

The use of a calendar/time-table blister package filled by the pharmacist by hypertensive elderly patients increased their compliance with prescribed treatments to nearly 100%.