

PATIENTS ARE CONTENT WITH MEDICINE INFORMATION AT HOSPITAL DISCHARGE – BUT DO THEY GET WHAT THEY NEED?

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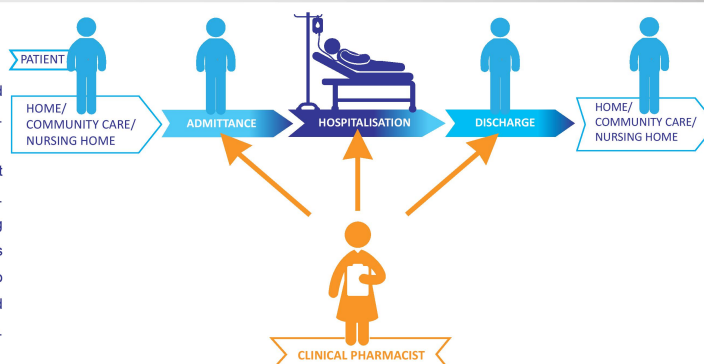
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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

Medication reconciliation and medicines review are standardised tasks in the Integrated Medicines Management (IMM)-model (1,2) that is applied in Norwegian hospitals.

The process of discharge from the hospital to home is a critical point in the patient pathway for ensuring continuity of care in general and medicines information in special. Different health care professionals could be involved in the process of informing patients on their drug use, and the role of the clinical pharmacists in this workflow is not yet defined. An understanding of patients' experiences and needs is mandatory to provide drug information in a way that assures every patients the knowledge needed to handle his or her medicines at home.



SETTING AND METHOD

200 patients using at least one drug at the time of admittance and at the time of discharge from three medical wards (cardiology, nephrology and general internal medicine) at Oslo University Hospital (OUS), Ullevål, were included in the study. All patients handled their own drugs. The patients received both written and oral information about the study, and were asked to fill in a questionnaire and/or participate in a qualitative semi-structured interview within the first weeks after discharge from hospital. Distribution of answers to the questionnaire were calculated and the chi square test was applied for comparisons between groups of patients. The qualitative interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed according to Malterud's method for systematic text condensation (3).

MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES

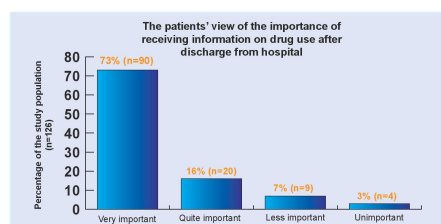
Type of medicines information received at discharge from hospital, self-reported degree of satisfaction with this information, expectations and needs concerning general drug information and individual medicine use at home after being admitted to hospital.

"What does vesp mean? It says Sobril 15 mg v-e-s-p, vesp. That is a problem – that doctors find it so cool to write in a very difficult Norwegian, or they use the old world language Latin. I find it very strange that they don't use a more understandable language, at least in the discharge summary or other notes for the patients, which are important to understand." (Male, 47 years old).

"I received an updated medication list. I think this is important because you might not fully comprehend what is being said when you are lying there, and you are not doing well and it is hurting a bit both here and there. Then you might not quite get what they are saying. So what you receive in writing is quite important, and I got that, an updated medication list." (Male 70 years old)

"A patient being discharged from hospital who is starting a new drug treatment should receive concise information about the use of these drugs. That is my clear answer" (Female, 67 years old)

RESULTS



Variable	No of patients	%	Range
Women	53	42	
Age (mean) in years	70		25-96
Cardiac ward	54	43	
Nephrology ward	29	23	
Internal medicine	43	34	

The response rate for the questionnaire was 64% (126/200).

A majority of the patients, 77%, reported that they had received written and/or oral medicines information at discharge from hospital. Accordingly, 23% of the patients claimed that they received no information at all on their drugs. In general, patients expressed satisfaction with the medicines information received. Women were significantly more satisfied than men ($p < 0.04$). There were no statistically significant differences between the three wards.

According to the answers from the questionnaire, patients were least satisfied with the information on side effects and drug interactions. This was supported by results from the interviews. The interviews revealed an incomplete understanding of the coherence between illness and the drug(s) prescribed. This indicates that the patients might not have the essential information on the indication and effects of each drug, even though they seem to think so themselves. The patients included in the study considered themselves responsible medicine users with well-organised administration of their drugs. On the other hand, patients also reported receiving incomplete information regarding drug treatment and follow-up after discharge from hospital. The patients expressed a desire to receive both written and oral information on an individual basis before leaving the hospital.

CONCLUSION

Patients were mainly satisfied with the medicine information they received at discharge. However, a more profound information on each drug, including indication, effects, side effects and potential drug interactions were requested by several patients both in the questionnaire and in the interview. Written and oral information on drug use after discharge from hospital should be ensured and explained to the individual patient based on his or her former experience and level of knowledge.

References:

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