

Original article



COMMITMENT OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS ON PROPHYLAXIS ACCORDING TO THE PATIENT'S OPINION

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SUMMARY

The vicious cycle of underestimating promotion and prevention of health care by all involved – patients, medical and dental general practitioners (GP) continues. According to the health regulation, GPs should inform their patients about the mandatory annual check-ups. GPs are obliged to put in a visible place in their medical office information about all mandatory check-ups for patients under 18 years old – when they are and what they should include.

The aim is to study patients' opinion regarding the role of medical and dental general practitioners in prophylaxis.

Material and Methods: A questionnaire was prepared, for the purposes of the study. The methods utilised were a direct individual anonymous questionnaire, statistical – descriptive, analytical (hi – square). The answers were examined and statistically processed according to age, gender and education level of the participants.

Results:

1. According to the questionnaires, almost 90 % of patients do not receive equate information about their oral and medical condition.

2. Only 1/5 of GPs inform their patients about the mandatory annual check –ups, immunisations and procedures related to the patient's age. Conclusion: Strict control of the activities of GPs and sanctions for non- regular patients are needed.

Keywords: GP, public health promotion and prevention,

INTRODUCTION

The vicious cycle of underestimating promotion and prevention of health care by all involved – patients, medical and dental general practitioners (GP) continues. According to the health regulation, GPs should inform their patients about the mandatory annual check-ups. GPs are

obliged to put in a visible place in their medical office information about all mandatory check-ups for patients under 18 years old – when they are and what they should include. Primary Health Care (PHC) covers primary health care, prophylaxis, health promotion and health education of the population [1, 2]. The basis of PHC is the access, equality, necessity of technology, inter-discipline cooperation and the active participation of society. The leading figure is the General Practitioner (GP), who treats acute and chronic diseases and provides prophylaxis and health education for all ages and both genders. They are prepared to treat patients with multiple diseases. Their role is of great importance to an ageing population, orientated to all needs of the patients. GP are capable of opening the right doors in the Healthcare system after their diagnostic of the patient [3, 4, 5, 6, 7].

The aim

The aim is to study patients' opinion regarding the role of medical and dental general practitioners in prophylaxis.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A questionnaire was prepared, for the purposes of the study. The methods utilized were a direct individual anonymous questionnaire, statistical–descriptive, analytical (hi–square). The answers were examined and statistically processed according to **age, gender and education level** of the participants.

The questions were collected during a period of 2 months, and the participants were workers in “Fantastiko” shop, “The Dots” company, “Work and Law”, my patients with different professions, parents and workers in ESPA School, neighbours and my friends.

The number of participants who filled in the questionnaire was 391, but only 385 of the questionnaires were adequately filled. Only these were included in the statistics process - 385 in total.

Table 1. The Quest

gender		age				education	
M	F	18-24	25-44	45-59	60+	secondary	higher

Question No.		Answer
1	Does your GP/dental practitioner inform you comprehensively about your health condition/oral health?	A. Yes B. No
2	Did your GP/dental practitioner inform you about the necessary annual checkups, immunisations and the prophylactic procedures corresponding to your age?	A. Yes B. No C. There's rarely time
3	Did your dental practitioner train you how to maintain appropriate oral hygiene?	A. Yes B. No C. If only I ask

RESULTS:

From 385 participants, according to **sex** - 46.5% are male and 53,5% are female. According to **age**, the number of 18-24 years old is 21,3%, 25-44 year olds are 39%, 45-59 year olds are 30,6% and over 60 years old are only 9,1%. According to **education** - 71,4% have higher education and 28,6% are with secondary education.

Results of **Question No. 1** - Does your GP/dental practitioner inform you comprehensively about your health condition/oral health?

- 90% answered that they don't receive adequate information about their health condition. It seems that the doctor treats the symptoms and doesn't pay enough attention to the whole status.

- **According to sex:** 92,7% of men and 86,9% of women answered that their general practitioner (GP) hadn't informed them adequately about their health condition. Only 10,4% answered that they had received adequate information. Pearson Chi-Square = 12,830 ; p= 0,000

- **According to age:** The highest % of answers "Yes" is found in the age group 60+., followed by the 25-44 one with 15,3%. 5% total for the other groups. 95% of the other two groups - 18-24 and 45-59 years old - answered "No", and 80% of the groups 25-44 and 60+ years old also answered "No". Pearson Chi-Square = 13,330 ; p= 0,003

- **According to education:** The difference in answers of the ones with secondary and higher education is around 10%. Pearson Chi-Square = 12,840 ; p= 0,003

Results of **Question No. 2** - Did your GP/dental practitioner inform you about the necessary annual checkups, immunisations and the prophylactic procedures corresponding to your age?

- Very few medical specialists give this kind of information. Even if we sum all those with answers "There's rarely time", only 1/5 of doctors inform their patients, according to patients.

- **According to sex:** There is no great difference in answers according to sex – around 3%.
Pearson Chi-Square = 13,830 ; p= 0,003

- **According to age:** Of all groups, only 6,8 % an-

swered "Yes". For answer "No" the percentage is higher - 79,5 %, and again there is no difference between the groups. For the third answer - "Rarely there is time" - the percentage is 13,8. Pearson Chi-Square = 12,657 ; p= 0,049

- **According to education:** Very high % - 80% - for answer "No". 10% difference in the answer "No" according to education – more for the ones with secondary education. For the other two answers there is no difference, and the percentage is very low – up to 10%. Pearson Chi-Square = 30,100 ; p= 0,000.

Results of **Question No. 3** - Did your dental practitioner train you how to maintain appropriate oral hygiene?

- In more than 50 % „Training“ was done only after patients' request.

- **According to sex:** Women are more active in searching for information (the difference between men and women on average is 8%. Pearson Chi-Square=7,691, p= 0,021

- **According to age:** The highest % of answer "Yes" is in the group 25-44 years old. It shows that the most active part of the population also take most care about their health. The highest % of answers "No" is in 60 + years old group. The lowest percentage of participants who are interested in their oral health is in the age group 60 +. At the age of 25-44 , it is difficult to change habits, and more often there are chronic diseases which are leading. That is the reason why dentists (GDP) do not see a point in education. Pearson Chi-Square = 30,100, p = 0,000

- **According to education:** There is no difference in the answers expect one "No" where 15% more do not receive the adequate information. Pearson Chi-Square = 8,684,p = 0,013.

Overall results from the quest:

1. According to the questionnaires, almost 90% of patients do not receive adequate information about their oral and medical health.

2. Only 1/5 of GPs inform their patients about the mandatory annual check-ups, immunizations and procedures related to the patient's age.

DISCUSSION:

GP is the one who coordinates the treatment and prevention. Their role in prophylaxis and prevention of diseases is irreplaceable! In the opinion of GP the low payment, the higher number of patients, the higher number of illnesses and sanctions of NHF lead to unstable healthcare, mistrust by patients in doctors, prevention, prophylaxis and medicine. Probably this is the reason why patients are seeking alternative methods of treatment [2, 5, 6].

Due to lack of knowledge, patients are not ready and free to choose alone, and they should rely on their doc-

tors. Doctors should take care of their patients and do what's best for them. The medical ethic is related to principles of moral attitude and behaviour. Doctors should be loyal to the patients, the society, their profession and standards. The interest of the patients and doctors should be fairly regulated by law [1, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11].

CONCLUSION:

Strict control of the activities of GPs and sanctions for non-regular patients are needed.

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