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## **ADMINISTRATING ORAL MEDICATIONS TO PATIENTS WITH DYSPHAGIA**

The administration of oral medications seems the simplest and safest way to treat patients. But there is group of patients, who might struggle with it or cannot use commercial oral medication at all. These are the patients with dysphagia and the availability of suitable oral medications for these patients is huge problem. This means, that often the tablets needed to be crushed and capsules opened and this is in many cases unlicensed medication use and for addition, might change the medications' action.

The purpose of this study was to establish the size of the patient group in Tartu University Hospital intensive care units and nursing and rehabilitation wards and the medications administered to the patients. In 2016, there was retrospective medication usage study in five wards. The data was collected for all the patients with dysphagia that had oral medications administered at the same day. To check the possibility to crush or disperse these medications, the information from manufacturers (found in Summary of Product Characteristics and asked by e-mail) and two handbooks was used. 154 patients were enrolled to study: 114 from three Intensive Care units (most with nasogastric feeding tube) and 40 from Nursing Therapy and Rehabilitation Treatment units. 470 oral medication administrations were recorded, 346 (74%) of them were administrations of tablets that needed the crushing or dispersing prior to administration. 99 different medications were used and according to manufacturers info, only about 10% of the solid oral medications recorded in study could be crushed or dispersed prior to administration.

The oral administration of medications to patients with dysphagia is difficult and need thorough thinking of which medications and how can be prescribed. These are definitely decisions where the special knowledge about the medication technology is very useful and therefore pharmacists should be more involved.