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Patients' perspective towards professional consultation and pharmacy selection in Lithuania

Background:

Pharmacist consultation is important for patients to ensure proper choice and appropriate use of medications. (Dis)loyalty to the same pharmacy may be a sign of (dis)satisfaction and professional knowledge, communication or service issues in pharmacy.

Objective:

To determine public opinion towards community pharmacies and professional counselling in Lithuania.

Methods:

The questionnaire survey method was chosen. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts – questions about pharmacy visits, consultation, communication in pharmacy and demographic characteristics. 500 questionnaires were distributed. Chi-square test method was used to analyse the differences among the groups.

Results:

15.1% of the patients choose the same pharmacy; the remaining ones do so frequently or never choose same pharmacy. Education ($p=0.003$) is the only significant factor. Main preferences for pharmacy selection are location (76.6%), prices (59.2%) and specialist consultation (35.8%). 44.2% of respondents always need consultation, 27.5% – frequently, the rest do not need it. Employment ($p=0.001$) and age ($p=0.001$) recorded statistical significance. 60% of the patients ask questions, 27.5% ask them frequently and 12.5% do not ask any questions. Education ($p=0.001$) and income ($p<0.001$) recorded statistical significance.

Conclusions:

In Lithuania specialist consultation and professional knowledge is irrelevant to many patients. Pharmacist-patient communication skills must be evaluated and developed.