Drug Shortages in Three Randomly Selected Public Pharmacies in Montenegro

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INTRODUCTION AND AIM Drug shortages (DS) cause many problems for physicians, health care facilities, patients and regulatory bodies. This study was performed to determine which medicines, depending on Anatomical Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification system and route of administration, were short in supply in public pharmacies in Montenegro during one-year period. METHODS Given the lack of national database of medicines in short supply, required information were obtained through semi-structural interviews about DS during 2018, with pharmacists employed in three public pharmacies, randomly selected from each region of the country. This prospective study was carried out within the framework of a two-year National project on DS in Montenegro. RESULTS Most of the drugs short in supply were Ophthalmological drugs (ATC code S01) in the form of eye drops, with prevalence of anti-glaucoma preparations and miotics (S01E), such as pilocarpine, timolol and travoprost. The second place was taken by Antidepressants (N06A) for oral administration, like amitriptyline, escitalopram and mianserin. They were followed by Antibacterial drugs for systemic application (J01), such as cefuroxime and ceftriaxone, and Psycholeptics (N05), most often Antipsychotics (N05A), like promazine, and Anxiolytics (N05B), like bromazepam. CONCUSLION Patients with eye diseases, especially glaucoma, were mostly affected by DS during the one-year period in Montenegro. In second place are patients with depression, in which the lack of the right remedy can have serious consequences, including suicide. It is necessary that all members in the supply chain take additional measures and activities in order to reduce this problem.