INSURANCE CLAIMS AS A DEVICE FOR MEASURING THE PHARMACISTS SUBSTITUTION RIGHT IN A FRENCH DEPARTMENT

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OBJECTIVE: The use of generic drugs has not been as successful as hoped in France. In order to increase their use, rights of replacement have been given to pharmacists through 1999. The aim of this study is to determine the factors influencing prescription of generics by doctors and generic substitutions by pharmacists.

METHODS: We have analyzed reimbursement data from a Department (CPAM93) that has drug-dispensing data from 15 June 2000. The AFSSAPS and the Sempex Data databases were used to evaluate reimbursement data. Chi-square and logistic regression tests were used to establish determining factors for prescribing and replacing with generic drugs.

RESULTS: The file analyzed contained 25,422 reimbursement prescription lines involving 6578 patients. Sixty percent of the patients were women, 1964 carried exemption certificates (EXOTM) and 953 received CMU (general state health coverage). The average age of the patients was 43.3 years. The drugs belonging to the AFSSAPS repertoire consisted of 3902 prescription lines. There were 1257 generic drugs that could either be prescribed by the doctor or dispensed in replacement. Three hundred seventy five prescription lines were replaced by pharmacists, or 12.42% of those that could have been replaced. Four products represented more than half of the replaced drugs. The patient characteristics considered by the pharmacist when replacing the drug were lack of EXOTM, age below 65 years old, and the presence of CMU. Prescriptions for generic drugs by the doctor made up 53.50% of the generic prescription lines dispensed, although only 18.20% of the lines reimbursed were on the AFSSAPS listing. CMU, lack of an exemption certificate (EXOTM) and age under 65 years old were the factors taken into account by the doctor when prescribing generic drugs.

CONCLUSION: The use of generic drugs in France could be much more widespread.

THE USE OF ECONOMIC INFORMATION IN HOSPITAL FORMULARY DEVELOPMENT IN A FRENCH REGION

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OBJECTIVE: Over the last 15 years pharmacoeconomics research has grown rapidly, but little is known about the actual use of economic information in health-care decision-making. We conducted semi-structured interviews with hospital pharmacists in a French region to determine the role of economic information in drug selection for hospital formularies.

METHODS: We developed an interview schedule based on a literature review and three pilot interviews. We interviewed pharmacists in short stay hospitals with more than 100 beds. Thirteen public hospitals (PH) and six private clinics (PC) in the Rhone-Alpes region, in France, were randomly selected. Interviews were taped and the transcripts were coded independently by two researchers. We compared the six PC, financed on a fee-for-service basis, with the 13 PH, financed on a global budget basis, by multiple correspondence analysis.

PILOT STUDY TO DETERMINE THE DEMOGRAPHICS, REASONS, AND TYPES OF MEDICATIONS PURCHASED IN MEXICO BY US RESIDENTS

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OBJECTIVE: The objective of this research survey is to determine the types of medications, reasons, and demographics of Americans going to Mexico to purchase medications.

METHODS: This is a survey in which a voluntary, self-administered questionnaire consisting of twenty-four questions divided into three sections regarding patient demographics, information pertaining to the purchase, and information relating to the reasons why Americans chose to purchase medications in Mexico, is utilized. The population for this study consists of one hundred US citizens or immigrants purchasing medications in Progresso, Mexico.

RESULTS: Results indicate that 60% of the participants had some form of private insurance, 18% had Medicare, and only 19% had no insurance at all. The number one reason for which participants traveled to Mexico to purchase medications is the lower price (85%) followed by lack of insurance (22%), and not wanting to pay for a physician’s office visit (17%). The treatment of infection is listed by 41% of the participants as the condition for which the medication they purchased is used. Hypertension (16%), and gastrointestinal disorders (13%) are the next most common medical conditions listed. Ampicillin (25%) is the number one medication purchased. Eighty-six percent of the people surveyed purchased one to three different types of medications, and 46% of the people spent between eleven and fifty dollars for their purchases.

CONCLUSION: This pilot study indicates that Americans are traveling to Mexico to purchase medications for many reasons and for many different medical conditions. Based on this study, the major reason for going outside the country to purchase medications is the lower cost, even for people with private insurance. Further studies are needed to determine the specific implications and possible problems associated with taking such drastic steps to acquire the necessary medications by US citizens.