PERSONAL DRUG UTILIZATION REPORT (PDUR)—A CONTRIBUTION TO COST REDUCTION AND PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

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OBJECTIVES: The lack of transparency in health care is one of the major obstacles to ensure rational and cost-effective use of health care resources. Reduction of costs for drugs is an important challenge for the statutory sickness funds in Germany. The Techniker Krankenkasse (TK) as one of the largest statutory sickness funds pays special attention to this development by offering an individualized service to their insurees called “Personal Drug Utilization Report” (PDUR). This service informs patients about their drug use behaviours and is expected to discuss either with the physician or the pharmacist. PDUR aims to: 1) Improve patients’ knowledge about their drug utilization; 2) influence their behaviours; 3) contribute to patients’ active participation in the medical decision process; and 4) strengthen patients’ compliance. METHODS: Based on pharmacy claims data, the patients receive their PDUR upon request that comprises all drugs and medical devices prescribed by a physician and dispensed by community pharmacies. Currently, PDUR covers the prescription data of the last 24 months and lists following items: product name, dispensing date, dispensing pharmacies, co-payments, central pharmaceutical number. RESULTS: PDUR has found a wide acceptance with the TK insurees: from August, 2003 to May, 2004 50,000 (17.9% of all eligible patients for this service) asked for their individual PDUR. CONCLUSIONS: Expanding health-orientated services, elaborating drug information systems and strengthening the patient role in the health care system are of importance for TK. The high grade of acceptance shows that PDUR fits the patients’ need and expectancies. PDUR is considered as a first module to implement other tools like an electronic patient dossier and will be supplemented by other health-related services. In the future, all PDUR will be accompanied by a satisfaction survey. First results of a health-economic evaluation are expected for the end of this year.

WEIGHING DIAGNOSES IN EVALUATION STUDIES WITH AN APPLICATION TO SYNCOPE

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OBJECTIVES: It is difficult to assess the efficiency of diagnostic strategies without knowledge of the outcome of subsequent treatment. This is particularly true for strategies that aim to identify various diagnoses, each of which leading to a different treatment. We propose a methodology for weighing different diagnoses, illustrated by a diagnostic study of syncope. METHODS: After listing all diagnoses (n = 27) that might explain the occurrences of syncope, we first applied the retortory grid technique of Kelly’s personal construct theory to a core group of internists, a neurologist and a cardiologist to produce assessment criteria that are relevant for the weighing of diagnoses. Secondly, we invited an extended expert panel of 11 specialists to score the relevance of each criterion on a 0–10 visual analogue scale and, subsequently, to rank each diagnosis at each criterion on a 0–100 scale. The third step consists of calculating the summed products of the criterion relevance scores and the diagnosis rank scores at each criterion for each diagnosis separately to derive diagnosis specific weights. RESULTS: The core specialist group identified eight criteria for the weighing of syncope diagnoses. The criteria were, by descending order of relevance: mortality (7.4), treatability (6.6), quality of life (5.8), prognosis (5.4), frequency of episodes (5.1), presence of presyncope (4.2), treatment costs (3.3), and prevalence (3.0). The most important diagnoses were secondary (2432) and primary (2407) autonomic failure syndromes, acute aortic dissection (2266), and obstructive cardiomyopathy (2156). The least important ones were hyperventilation with hypocapnia (1296) and volume depletion (1152). CONCLUSIONS: The presented methodology successfully generated diagnosis specific weights that can be used for the evaluation of diagnostic strategies during decision modeling. The methodology will further be strengthened by an expert panel consensus meeting between the second and third steps to clarify and minimize score and ranking differences.