

## Abstract

Title: Patient perspective of medication information desired

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**Background:** Even from the decade of 1970, patients wanted more information about drugs and did not want to be so depended on the information the physician provided them. Today patients are more than ever informed about their disease and the available and appropriate treatment, due to the high volume of information that can be acquired through the Internet. The traditional role of pharmacists was the provision of medicines to the population. However, nowadays, this role has been changed so as to include other tasks, such as management of prescribed medicines, and promotion of health, since pharmacists can serve as a source of expertise knowledge to the customers. Due to the fact that there is no relevant research for the case of Greek patients, this pilot research could help to fill this gap, by trying to find out what kind of information patients want to know about medicines in several pharmacies in Greece.

**Aim:** The aim of this research is to examine what kind of information patients want related to medicines. More precisely, this research will try to identify the type of information with interest patients, when they are going to take medicines from the pharmacies.

**Methods:** A quantitative method was chosen. A questionnaire was used in order to capture the opinions of the patients who participated in the research regarding the information they need from pharmacists, how sufficient this information is and whether they search for additional information. The sample of the research consisted of 38 participants from Athens, Greece.

**Results:** The mean age of all the participants was 60 years old. Half of them were males. Most of the participants in the research (31.6%) had finished secondary education, 26.3% claimed that the highest education that they have achieved is primary education, and 23.7% have not even finished primary education. Half of the participants were retired and 31.6% were employed. The average number of medicines that a respondent could take is 2 medicines per day and the maximum number is 5 medicines per day. Most of the participants in the research answered that they are picking up a prescription for medicines used regularly (78.9%). Also, most of the

participants in the research (57.9%) refill their prescription for medicines they used regularly every month and 31.6% refilled their prescription for medicines they used regularly every three months. Moreover, most participants require information about the dosage and the side effects of the medicines, but 84.2% of them do not ask information about what kind of medicine has their doctor prescribed, and 86.8% wanted to obtain information from their pharmacist regarding the dosage of the medicine prescribed. About half of the participants (52.6%) stated that they wanted to know about the side effects of the medicine they take. Almost, all of the participants (92.1%) did not want to obtain information regarding medicine's interaction with other medicines. Furthermore, most of the participants (84.2%) claimed that the information provided to them by the pharmacist concerning their medicines is sufficient for them, and 60.5% of participants seek for additional information with regard to their medicines. About half of the participants (52.2%) stated that they did not know the names of the medicines, but they knew their disease, the package of the medicines and the dosage. People with higher educational level search for additional information significantly more than those who have lower educational level ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ). Participants who are retired ask information about the dosage from their pharmacists while dispensing refill medicine significantly more than the other ( $p$ -value $< 0.05$ ), where those who are retired answered positively

**Conclusion:** Most of participants wanted their pharmacist to provide them with information about the dosage and the side effects of the medicines while dispensing new medicine and while dispensing refill medicine. On the contrary, they claimed that they do not ask for information regarding what kind of medicine has their doctor prescribed them or whether it is suitable for their disease. Moreover, they did not want information about whether the medicine they take is generic or not, or information regarding medicine's interaction with other medicines. The majority of the participants in the research stated that the information provided by the pharmacist on their medicines was sufficient.