

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES IN THE FIELD OF POPULATION'S SUPPORT WITH MEDICINES. NOTE I. STUDY OF PHARMACISTS' OPINIONS IN ROMANIA

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Abstract

In our study we present the opinions of providers (pharmacists and doctors) and consumers (patients) of pharmaceutical products and services, about the future of pharmacy, pharmacist and medicine in Romania at the glide of 20th and 21st centuries. We have designed and distributed a questionnaire to pharmacists concerning the pharmacy profile, problems and activities relative to phases of any managerial process: objectives, legislative frame, organisation, medicine policy, human resources, activity coordination, performance measurement, supervision of the pharmaceutical activity.

In this paper we presented the data processed concerning the profile of pharmacies included in the study, organisation of the pharmacy space, relationship of pharmacists with medical representatives, ranking levels of the main markers specific to the pharmacy development in Romania, primary objectives of the pharmaceutical management.

Rezumat

În studiul nostru am realizat un sondaj asupra opiniilor furnizorilor (farmaciști și medici) și consumatorilor (pacienți) de produse și servicii farmaceutice, despre viitorul farmaciei, farmacistului și medicamentului în România la cumpăna secolelor XX – XXI. Am realizat și distribuit farmaciștilor un chestionar cu întrebări referitoare la profilul farmaciei și opinii privind problemele și activitățile specifice fazelor oricărui proces managerial: obiective, cadrul legislativ, organizarea, politica medicamentului, resursele umane, coordonarea activităților, măsurarea realizărilor, supravegherea activității farmaceutice.

În lucrarea de față am sintetizat datele prelucrate referitoare la profilul farmaciilor cuprinse în studiu, organizarea spațiului în farmacii, relația cu reprezentanții medicali, aprecierea nivelului principalilor indicatori specifici de dezvoltare a farmaciei în România, obiective prioritare ale managementului farmaceutic. În nota II vom analiza opiniile medicilor și pacienților.

Keywords: pharmaceutical management, objectives, priorities.

Introduction

The main managerial function of the pharmacy is to assist population with regard to medicines which means permanent update on the needs of the

beneficiaries of pharmaceutical services. The need to have management and marketing knowledge in this activity field is a reality that needs no further demonstration. The pharmaceutical field of activity – extraordinary varied and complex – follows the same management pattern in any other domain, consisting of functions, objectives and problems corresponding to five management phases: anticipation, organisation, training, coordination and control-evaluation. The function of management, in general, should be establishing objectives and purposes, to permanently create policies and strategies, which will serve as a frame for reaching the set objectives, actions that are part of the anticipation phase [1, 6, 9, 10].

Materials and Methods

To know the pharmacists' opinion concerning strategic objectives, middle-term objectives and short-term objectives in the field of medication support to population, we performed a survey in which we used the questionnaire as work tool. In the present paper we provide answers given to eight questions the pharmacists were asked, of which five were closed questions, one was a semi-open question and two were open questions.

The answer options for the closed answers were: yes, no, to a certain degree or distributed to a Likert scale from 1 to 5 (very high, high, average, small and very small) [2, 3, 4, 8]. Of the 137 distributed questionnaires, 100 pharmacists gave full answers. The questionnaires were distributed and recovered "door-to-door" in single business pharmacies and in network pharmacies from August till November 2012.

Results and Discussion

Pharmacists participating in our study were employees of 67 pharmacies in Sibiu (Sb) and Argeş (Ag) counties (Romania) with following profile (Table I):

Table I
Profile of surveyed pharmacies

County		Residential space		Type		Had space for:		
Sb	Ag	Urban	Rural	Single pharmacies	Network pharmacies	Formulation room	Laboratory room	Private room
59 88%	8 12%	60 90%	7 10%	36 54%	31 46%	41 61%	17 25%	43 64%

In addition to information on pharmacies profile we wanted to know the views of pharmacists regarding the relation with medical representatives, the use of information sources for pharmacists, to assess the level of development of key indicators specific to the pharmacy in Romania [12, 13].

In this sense we asked the question: “Do medical representatives influence doctors and pharmacists as to prescribing/releasing a certain medicine?”. The results were as it follows: yes = 25%, no = 19%, in a certain degree = 56%.

For the question: “To what measure you use the information sources for pharmacists?”, the results are presented in Table II:

Table II

The measure of use sources of information for pharmacists (%)

Source	Very high	High	Average	Small	Very small
Special journals	23	40	30	5	2
Congresses and symposia	16	31	39	7	7
Medical representatives	9	26	45	16	4
Internet	24	28	27	14	7
Forms, therapy guides	17	28	26	24	5
Radio / Television	3	12	27	29	29
Other sources (please, name them)...	-	-	-	-	-

Responses to the question: “Please rate the main development indicators specific for today pharmacy”, were as follows: the ratio pharmacy/population was perceived by the interviews as being: Very good - 28%, Good - 35%, Average - 25%, Satisfactory - 9%, Unsatisfactory - 3%, and the ratio pharmacist/population: Very Good - 18%, Good - 24%, Average - 36%, Satisfactory - 17%, Unsatisfactory - 5%.

The organisation and management of pharmaceutical policy as to population’s support with medicines consists of objectives, actions and resources necessary to reach the objectives.

The main objectives in the pharmaceutical activity refer to “providing medicines and other pharmaceutical products” throughout the whole country, depending on morbidity, which asks for strategic marketing actions [5, 7, 11].

In order to obtain the points of view referring to setting pharmaceutical management objectives and their priority, we asked pharmacists: “To what measure you consider that following pharmaceutical management objectives is important for the population’s support with medicines?” (Table III).

Table III
Pharmaceutical management objectives, variants to answer, results (%)

Objectives	Very high	High	Average	Small	Very small
Balanced development of pharmaceutical support	49	28	12	6	5
Recovering gaps among counties	15	33	30	19	3
Anticipation and forecast in the pharmaceutical field	19	35	29	11	6
Intensification of research in the pharmaceutical field	46	22	16	10	6
Anticipation of morbidity evolution	31	23	27	13	6
Forecast of necessary medicine stock	36	27	21	13	3
Marketing programs to develop urban pharmacy	23	28	18	16	15
Marketing programs to develop rural pharmacy	34	30	23	7	6
Programs to develop production laboratories	30	24	21	16	9

One of the general principles regarding the organisation and management of population's pharmaceutical support implies that, upon their constitution, pharmaceutical units do not forget to "ensure access to medicine support for the entire population" [3].

Questioned as to these aspects, 49% of the pharmacists answered that the objective "Balanced development of pharmaceutical support" in the city and at the countryside are of highest importance, 28% mentioned high measure, 12% average measure, 6% small measure, 5% very small measure (Figure 1); the rates for the objective "Recovering gaps among counties" are: 15% very high, 33% high, 30% average, 19% small, 3% very small measure (Figure 2).

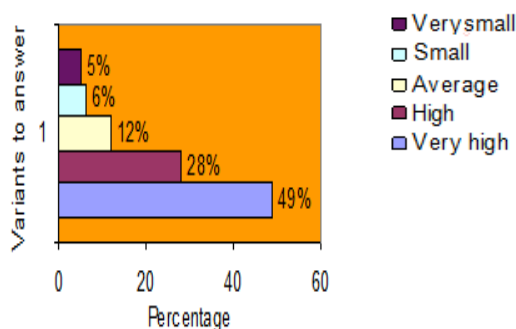


Figure 1
Balanced development of pharmaceutical support

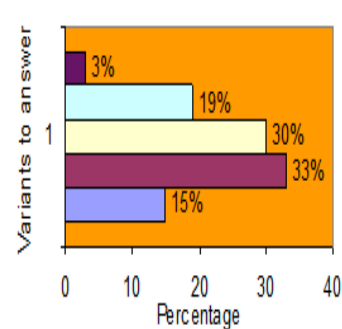


Figure 2
Recovering gaps among counties

Respondents' opinions as to the objectives "Anticipation and forecast in the pharmaceutical field" and "Intensification of research in the pharmaceutical field" are revealed by the following results: very high importance - 19%, high importance - 35%, average importance - 29%, small importance - 11%, very small importance - 6% (Figure 3), respectively, very high importance - 46%, high importance - 22%, average importance - 16%, small importance - 10%, very small importance - 6% (Figure 4).

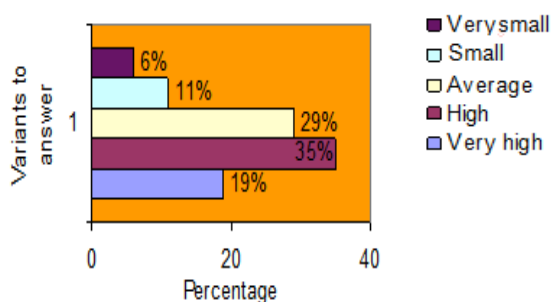


Figure 3

Anticipation and forecast in the pharmaceutical field

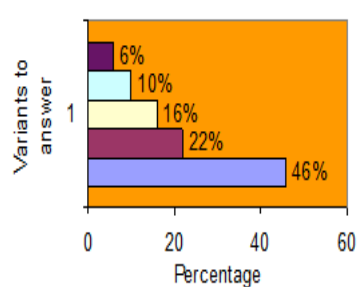


Figure 4

Intensification of research in the pharmaceutical field

Figures 5 and 6 show the schedule of the results obtained for the objectives "Anticipation of morbidity evolution" and "Forecast of the necessary medicine stock". "Anticipation of morbidity evolution" is valued by 31% of respondents as being of great importance. Gradually and decreasingly, the importance of this objective received the following rates: high - 23%, average - 27%, small - 13%, very small - 6%. As far as "Forecast of the necessary medicine stock" is concerned, the importance of the objective was considered to be: very high - 36%, high - 27%, average - 21%, small - 13%, very small - 3%.

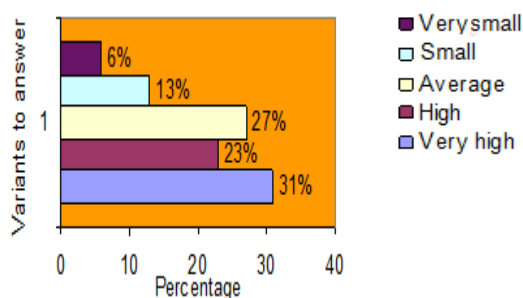


Figure 5
Anticipation of morbidity
evolution

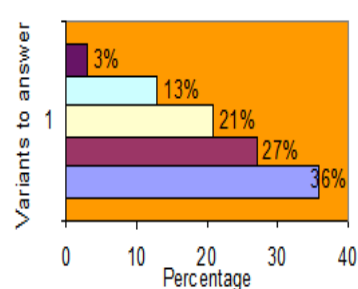


Figure 6
Forecast of necessary
medicine stock

A different importance refers to performing pharmaceutical forecasting and marketing studies in view of making strategic and tactical decisions. In this purpose, of great interest are the opinions regarding the importance objectives of “Marketing programs to develop urban pharmacy” and “Marketing programs to develop rural pharmacy”.

A parallel presentation of the results specific to the two objectives shows the following rates (urban/rural): highest importance - 23%/34%, high importance - 28%/30%, average importance - 18%/23%, small importance - 16%/7%, very small importance 15%/6% (Figures 7 and 8).

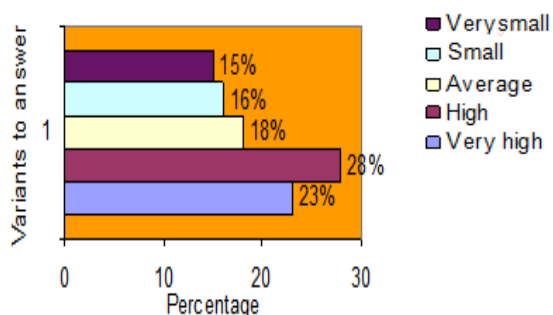


Figure 7
Marketing programs to develop
urban pharmacy

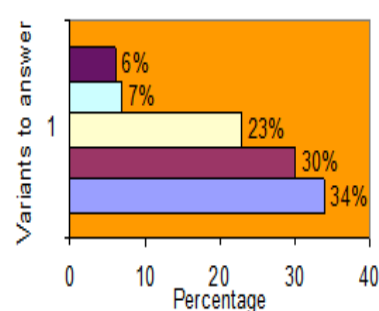


Figure 8
Marketing programs to develop
rural pharmacy

In respondents' view, the importance of the objective “Programs for production laboratory development” are in the following order: very high - 30%, high - 24%, average - 21%, small - 16%, very small - 9%.

Conclusions

The targeted pharmacies detained especially designed: formulation rooms (61%), laboratories (25%) and private rooms (64%).

It appears that medical representatives have an important influence on doctors and pharmacists in order to prescribe/release a particular medicine: 25% of the pharmacists confirm this aspect, and 56% assume the influence „to a certain degree”.

Pharmacists participating in the study used to obtain specialty information, to a “very high measure” and “high measure”, from the following sources (in descending order): special journals - 63%, internet - 52%, congresses and symposia - 47%, forms, therapy guides - 45%, medical sales representatives - 35%, radio/television - 15%; other sources - 0%.

The opinion expressed by respondents with regard to the development of specific indicators of pharmacy in Romania shows that the ratio pharmacy/population is considered very good by 28% and good by 35%, while the ratio pharmacist/population is regarded as very good by 18% and good by 24% of surveyed; findings suggest that the number of pharmacists who work in pharmacies is insufficient.

Observing the results of parallel development of marketing programs for urban and rural pharmacy reveals that pharmacy in rural areas should be developed.

Considering the rates for the answer “very high importance” and “high importance”, the objectives of pharmaceutical support in our country, for the current phase, are ordered as it follows: balances development of pharmaceutical support, with 77% of the answers; intensification of research in the pharmaceutical field, 68%; marketing programs to develop rural pharmacy, 64%; forecast of necessary medicine stock, 63%; anticipation of morbidity evolution, 54%; programs to develop production laboratories, 54%; anticipation and forecast in the pharmaceutical field, 54%; marketing programs to develop urban pharmacy, 51%; recovering gaps among counties, 48%.

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Erratum

The title of the article "Factors that have a negative impact on quality of life in children with ADHD" by Houssein Toufic Seblany et al., published in *Farmacia*, volume 62 (2) 2014, should be replaced with the following: „**Factors that have a negative impact on quality of life in children with ADHD and cerebral palsy**”.