Abstract

Reading the patient package inserts (PPIs) is a key source of information about medications for patients. They should be clear and understandable to the general population. Objectives: The aims of this study were to obtain base-line data on the extent of reading PPIs by consumers and possible factors that might affect this; to explore the attitude of the Palestinian public and healthcare professionals towards the patient package inserts (PPIs); and to review a random sample of PPIs for the availability of different information. Methods: The first part of the study was a cross-sectional self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire for consumers included 15 items. The questionnaire for healthcare professionals included 10 items and it was very similar to that of consumers with some modifications. In the second part, a random sample of PPIs was reviewed. In our community pharmacies, where medications are arranged according to their producing company, a researcher was asked to choose randomly 10-15 medications for every company to check for the availability of pharmacological, pharmaceutical and clinical information. Results: A total of 304 healthcare professionals out of 320 (95.0%) and 223 consumers out of 240 (92.9%) accepted to answer the survey. Forty five percent consumers reported that they always read the PPIs, and 29.3% said that they read the PPIs most of the times. Increased rate of reading the leaflet was found among females (P = 0.047). The preferred language for the PPIs was Arabic for most of the consumers (89.6%) while it was English for most of the healthcare professionals (80.8%). 35.9% of the consumers and 43.6% of the healthcare professionals found the font size suitable. 42.3% of the consumers and 25.5% of the healthcare professionals said that they found the information in the PPIs useful and enough. The PPIs of 135 randomly sampled medications were reviewed. Many important sections were not found in the PPIs’ sample. Conclusion: A high percentage of consumers read the PPIs, but still this needs to be improved. People would appreciate a more detailed and clear PPI. Pharmacists should advocate reading the PPIs but they need to provide consumers with detailed counseling to compensate for the missing information in some of the PPIs. Authorities and manufacturers should implement appropriate measures to regulate the quality and quantity of information in the PPIs.

Keywords