THE ANALYSIS OF PROBLEMS WITH THE USE OF INHALED DRUGS AMONG PATIENTS DIAGNOSED WITH RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

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Background Diseases, such as asthma or COPD require the use of inhaled drugs. Drug administration by inhalation allows the application of the drug directly to the airways, which contributes to reducing the dose of the drug as well as the occurrence of side effects. Despite the many advantages of the inhalation route of drug administration, other than oral administration, may cause problems for patients.

Purpose Qualitative and quantitative assessment of the problems with the use of inhaled drugs among patients with respiratory diseases, who use inhalers chronically.

Method The survey study was conducted among patients with asthma and COPD who used inhaled drugs. Patients were asked to assess their ability to use the inhaler, indicate problems with using this device and indicate professional staff who gave them information about inhalator. The photos of the different type of inhalers were used to allow patients to identify all types of inhalers they use in daily routine. After identification, patients were asked to describe how they manage with using each type of inhaler.

Findings 113 patients were included, mean age was 65 years (SD 16, range 23-90). Patients used 1 to 4 types of inhalers at the same time in total (mean 1,7 types of inhalators per patient). In the self-assessment, the most (91%) of patients claimed they use their inhalers without any problems, and they are satisfied with the treatment (83%). However, the objective assessment of storage, cleaning, dosage control and rinse of the mouth after inhalation showed that only 28 patients (24,8%) perform all these steps correctly. Half of the patients had problems with the verification of the number of doses left in the inhaler, one in five patients was not sure if he applied the total dose of inhaled drugs. More than half of the patients (58%) observed side effects during the use of inhaled drugs. Patients reported 109 symptoms of adverse reactions, e.g. hoarseness and fungal infection of the mouth.

Conclusion Results of the study showed that problems with the use of inhalers are common among patients. Many of them could be solved by pharmacists, if only they offer pharmaceutical care and education to patients.