Studying the Impact of Medication use Evaluation by the cOmmunity pharmacist (SIMENON): study protocol

Joke Wuyts 1, Isabelle De Wulf 2, Joris Maesschalck 3, Jan De Lepeleire 4, Veerle Foulon 5.
1KU Leuven. 2Association of Belgian Pharmacists. 3Association of Belgian Pharmacists. 4KU Leuven. 5KU Leuven

Background Many studies have shown that elderly, poly-medicated patients are prone to drug-related problems. Although there is growing evidence that the pharmacist could play a role in identifying and solving these problems, no structured pharmaceutical care services currently exist in Belgium to support elderly patients in their medication use.

Purpose The SIMENON study aims (1) to investigate the impact of a medication use evaluation by the community pharmacist on patient reported outcomes and (2) to describe drug-related problems and subsequent interventions identified during this review. In preparation for this intervention study, a feasibility study was conducted to test the proposed medication review process, formalize the educational program and develop supportive materials.

Method The medication use evaluation consists of a six step approach: patient inclusion, preparation by the pharmacist, patient anamnesis, analysis by the pharmacist, patient counseling and follow-up. In the feasibility study, nor the pharmacists nor the patients were recruited in a random manner. Instead, an iterative process with multiple individual and group feedback moments was conducted for data collection. In the SIMENON study, Belgian community pharmacies (n=80) participate on a voluntary basis. Patients are recruited randomly at a ratio of 12 per pharmacy (n=960). A before-after design is used to measure the impact of the medication review from the patient perspective. Patients are surveyed at three time points (before the intervention and 3 and 12 weeks after the intervention). The questionnaires focus both on humanistic (medicines related quality of life, patient satisfaction, self-management) and clinical outcomes (adherence). The medicines related quality of life is the primary outcome and is measured using the Living with Medicines Questionnaire. Drug related problems and solutions are documented throughout the medication review process by the pharmacist using the PharmDisk classification.

Findings In the feasibility study seven Belgian pharmacists included in total 19 patients. This exploratory research confirmed the six step approach and uncovered that pharmacists are reluctant to patient inclusion. Hence, a need for education on patient communication during the inclusion phase was revealed. Furthermore, a need for evidence-based information to guide pharmacists during the analysis phase, was identified. Based on these findings, an educational program was developed, including training on patient inclusion. The SIMENON study has just started and is expected to finalize in April 2017.

Conclusion This abstract describes the development of a protocol for an intervention study in which 80 Belgian community pharmacists perform a medicines use review for elderly, poly-medicated ambulatory patients.