The use of Goal Attainment Scaling during clinical medication review in older persons with polypharmacy

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Background Studies have shown that a clinical medication review (CMR) reduces drug-related problems (DRPs), but the effects on clinical outcomes are less clear. Perhaps, CMRs in older persons could be more effective when they focus on patients' personal goals and health-related complaints.

Purpose The aim of this study was to investigate whether goal attainment scaling (GAS) is a useful tool for determining goals and monitoring their attainment during CMR.

Method This study was an analysis based on data of the intervention group of the DREAMeR study; a randomized controlled trial investigating the effects of CMR in primary care. 315 persons aged ≥70 years using ≥7 drugs were randomised to the intervention: a CMR focused on personal goals using GAS. Outcome measures were: percentage of persons with health-related goals, attainment of goals measured with GAS-scores after three and six months, type of health-related goals and implementation rates of recommendations for GAS-related DRPs and other DRPs.

Findings A total of 406 health-related goals were set for 283 of 315 included persons (90%). Of the 350 evaluated goals (86%), 37% was attained after three months and 43% after six months. The goals ?reduce pain? (n=66, 16%), ?improve mobility? (n=57, 14%) and ?reduce number of pills? (n=37, 9.1%) were most prevalent. The implementation rate of recommendations for GAS-related DRPs was 81% compared to 62% for not GAS-related DRPs (p<0.05).

Conclusion Goal setting is important for prioritizing the most important problems during clinical medication review and Goal Attainment Scaling seems to be a useful tool for monitoring the attainment of these goals.