

## 10. COUNSELING OF PEDIATRIC PATIENTS IN COMMUNITY PHARMACIES.

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**Introduction.** Community pharmacy is an important part of the healthcare system, which serves a large part of the population of the Republic of Moldova, 21.6% of this population are children. Among these, the number of children living with a chronic health condition who take prescription drugs regularly, has grown substantially over the past several decades. In addition to chronic disease medications, approximately 70% of children have taken drugs to treat an acute condition. Direct communication with pediatric patients improves their adherence to treatment, helping to prevent drug errors, as well. Although children up to the age of 7 may be involved in treatment counseling, they are most often neglected by pharmacists.

**Aim of study.** To identify acceptable ways to increase the frequency of child counseling by community pharmacists by studying the interaction of community pharmacists with pediatric patients and their parents/caregivers.

**Methods and materials.** The observational study was conducted over a period of 14 days in community pharmacies in Chisinau, aiming to obtain information on: how often children accompany their parents/caregivers to pick up their prescription; how often children and parents/caregivers are counseled by pharmacists; which pharmacy staff members interacted with the family; the characteristics of the drugs dispensed; wait time; how many questions the child or caregiver asked the pharmacy staff. Additional details such as the child's age, gender, and medication information were obtained from the prescription.

**Results.** 86 cases of dispensing of drugs prescribed to children were analyzed. Most drugs were dispensed during the week (83,72%). 53,48% of prescribed drugs were for chronic diseases, in addition, in 69,76% of cases drugs for acute conditions were additionally prescribed. It has been estimated that direct communication between the pharmacist and the child takes place approximately 30% of the time, even if 90% of pharmacists dispense drugs to children on a daily basis. In addition, only 14% of parents reported receiving advice from a pharmacist when they were given a new medication. The most common indications for acute conditions were for infections (26,74%), of these: antibiotics – 13% and antiallergics – 9%. 70.93% were for chronic conditions, of which for attention deficit disorder – 23,25% and depression – 9,30%. Children were accompanied by their parents in about 32% of cases, and only about 2% of the children were counseled directly by the pharmacist.

**Conclusion.** These data show that, although the opportunities for counseling children are limited, pharmacists rarely advise children even when they are present at the pharmacy. As further studies, which would identify acceptable methods of increasing the frequency of child counseling by community pharmacists are needed, the study will continue.