

## 25. OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS IN EVALUATING OTC MEDICATIONS USE AMONG OLDER ADULTS.

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**Introduction.** The WHO data denote that every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the size and the proportion of older persons in the population, and the Republic of Moldova is no exception. It is a priority for the pharmaceutical field to take into account the particularities of drug therapy for older patients in order to minimize adverse effects and maximize potential benefit. Recent data demonstrate the increasing use of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs among elderly, but there are limited reports on the actual use of these. Pharmacists represent the most trusted source of information about OTC medications and are able to apprise their potential harmful effects.

**Aim of study.** To assess the community pharmacists attitudes on the elderly patient-associated characteristics of OTC medications use and to identify practical recommendations for pharmacists in preventing harmful effects of these agents.

**Methods and materials.** A 28-items questionnaire was provided to community pharmacists. To describe the pharmacists attitudes on OTC drugs use in the elderly were used the Likert scale questions. Obtained data were statistically processed.

**Results.** 112 questionnaires were included in the statistical analysis. Pharmacists that work in a community pharmacy in the urban area (78,6%) more than 10 years (48,2%) and hold the II category (31,3%) were prevailing in the analyzed group. Majority (n = 68, 60.71 %) of the respondents considered that elderly patients used OTC medications. More than 50% of respondents partially agree with the affirmation that elderly patients use OTC drugs at specialists' recommendation (doctors, pharmacists or other medical professionals). Most reported that the elderly patients ask questions about required OTC drugs (n=72, 64,29%), but in more than 50% cases they didn't remember the provided information or did not follow the pharmacist's recommendations. Respondents partially agree (n=65, 58,04%) with affirmation that elderly patients have appropriate knowledge about OTC drugs and disagree more than 50% with adequate knowledge about side effects, drug interactions etc. 53,5% of respondents indicated they totally agree with the necessity of medication safety tips for older adults provided in community pharmacy and more than 65% support that the quality of geriatric pharmaceutical care depends on the abilities of pharmacists obtained in continuous professional training.

**Conclusion.** The survey identified various aspects of OTC drugs use in the elderly and highlighted the opportunities for pharmacists to ensure the appropriateness of medication use in the elderly by individualized education.