

Self perceived medication problems among hospital physicians and nurses

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Context and objective

Parc de Salut MAR (PSMAR) offers integrated healthcare with a total of 900 beds to one of the four Integral Health Areas of the city of Barcelona with a population of 300.000 inhabitants. In the context of different and complementary initiatives in **patient safety** to prevent patient injuries, a **study to identify risk and problems related with medication perceived by physicians and nurses from the whole institution** was done.

Problem

Medication errors represent over 30% of medical errors. Although several adverse effect identification systems such as notification systems, audits of medical histories and registries of medical-related problems are actually implemented, **professional perception** of specific problems related to drug prescription, dispensing and administration have not been previously evaluated. The identification and the study of this perceived risks should be used to guide adaptative and constructive changes without waiting for accidents to occur.

Intervention and study design

It was an observational study based on self-perception of medication-related problems obtained through a semi-structured questionnaire delivered to all physicians and nurses of the institution through a referent professional form each clinical service or unit ward. They were invited to a meeting to explain the purpose of the study and were provided by a semi-structured questionnaire to be delivered, answered and returned to them by all colleagues from their services (**figure 1**). A total of 14 physicians and 25 nurses were selected as referents. The study was carried out from November 2011 to July 2012.

Results

A total of 218 questionnaires were returned from which 38 different problems were described and summarized in three categories: prescription, dispensing and administration (**figure 2**). Most of them were related to lack of training on the computer tool for a correct use of electronic prescription, computing problems and problems for specific medication or patients (**figure 3**).

Figure 1. Intervention and results

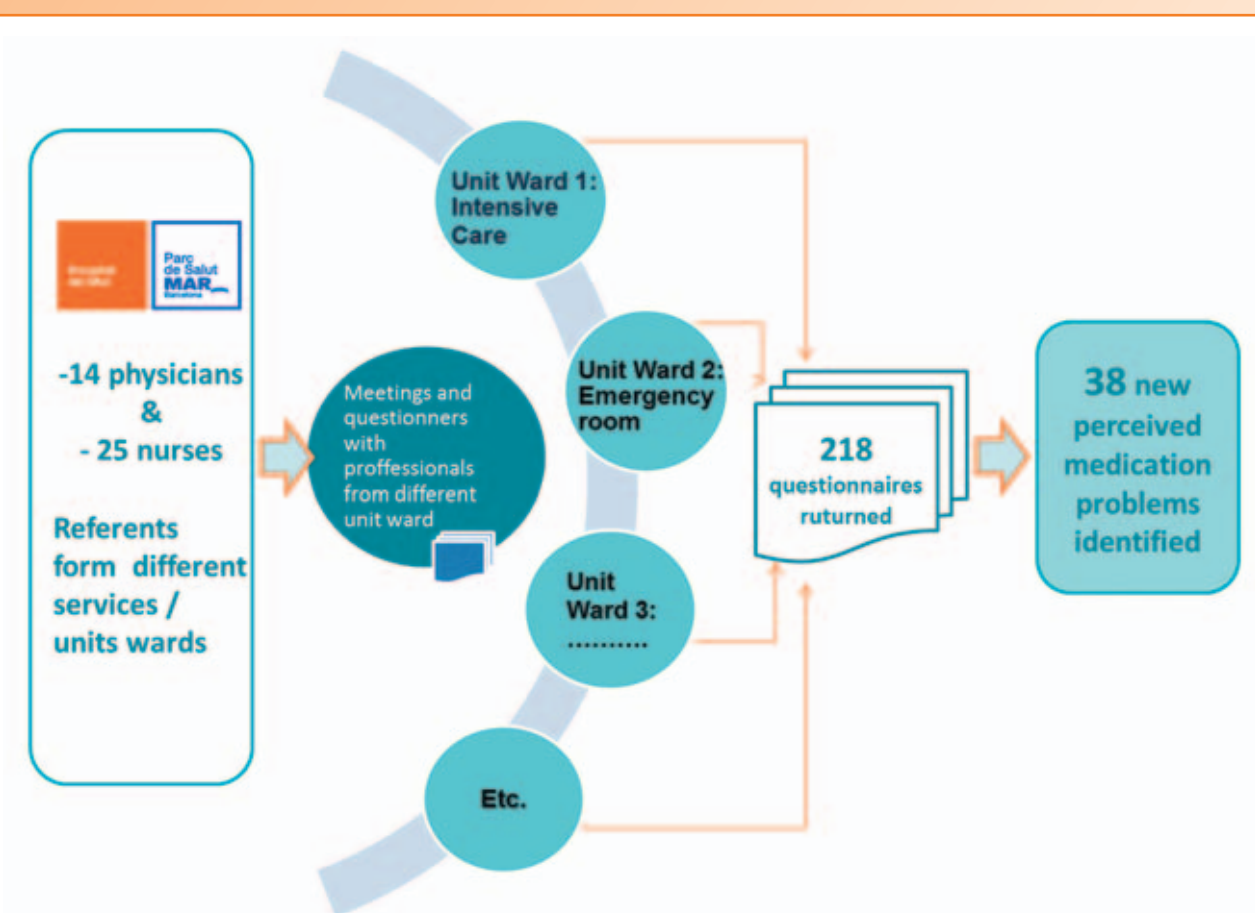


Figure 2. Number of perceived medication problems (n=38) by categories

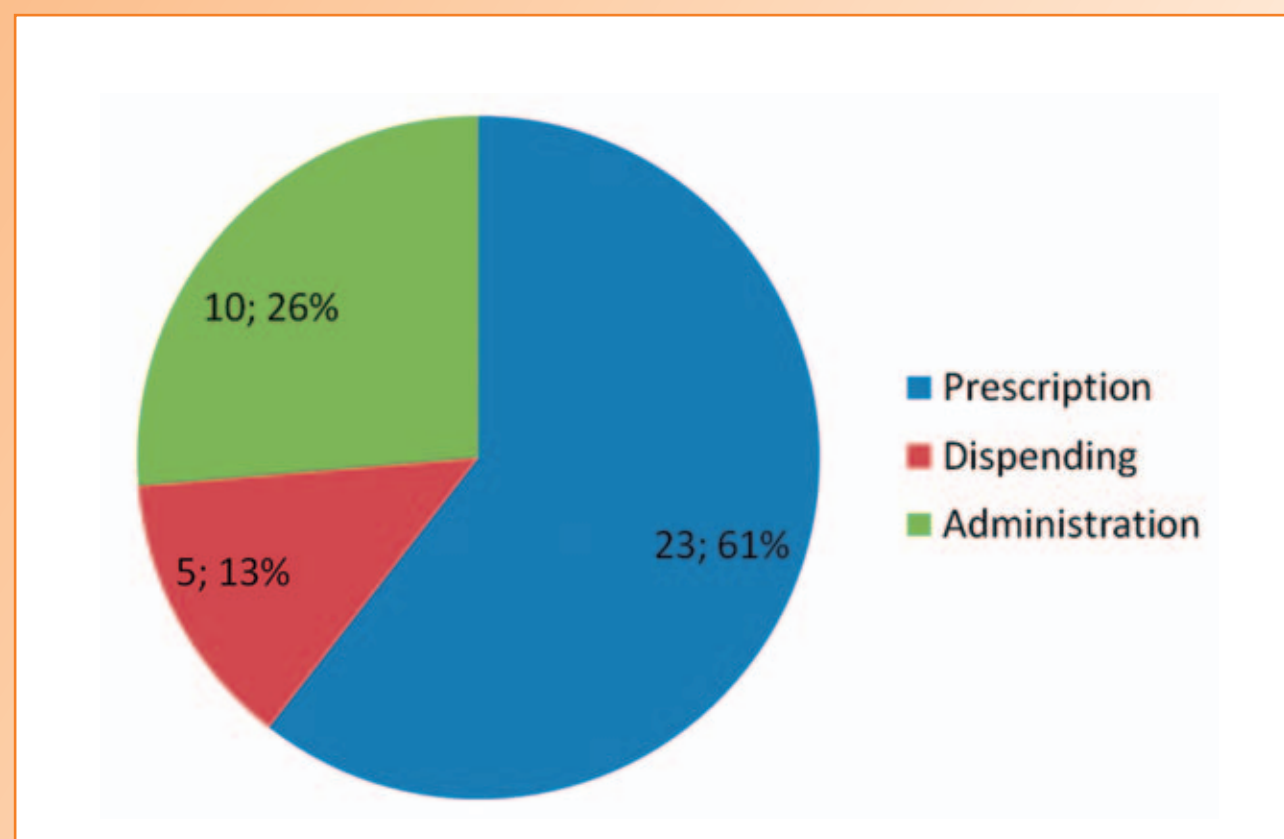
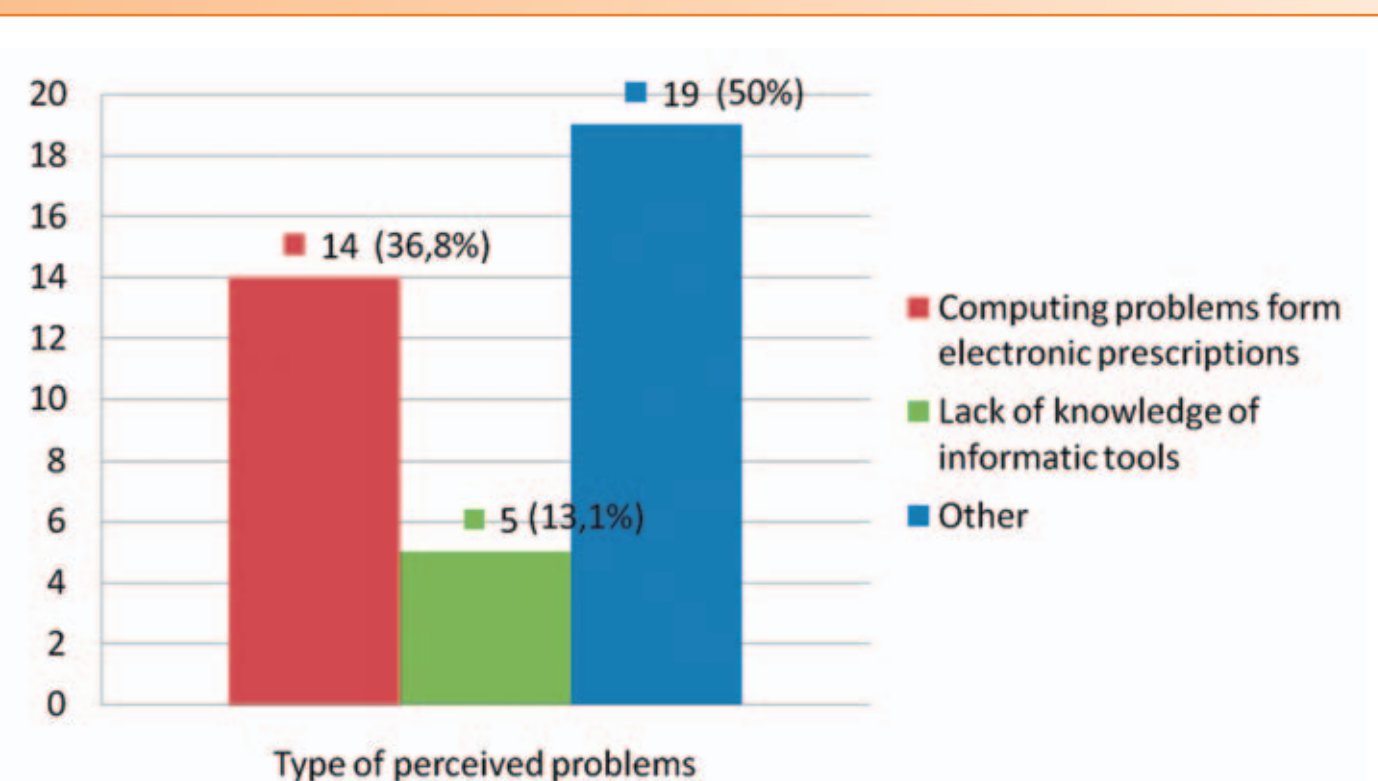


Figure 3. Type of perceived medication problems



Strategy for change

The results highlight areas for improvement in three areas: communication and training, general computing improvements and specific solutions:

- Courses to explain the computing tools to the professionals have been designed and scheduled.
- Some computing improvements have been implemented or are under development.
- Specific solutions such as different labelling, double check list, logistics of dispensing, etc. have also been implemented.
- All the results and changes have been published in the institutional intranet.

Lessons learn and message for others

The direct implication of professionals, asking them for their perceived problems in their daily practice is a complementary mechanism to:

- identify potential risks for patient safety not detected by other mechanisms of error detection.
- to take into account professional needs, perceptions and their proposal for solutions.
- the implication of professionals in this study allowed increasing the knowledge of patient safety initiatives and culture among them.

Please declare any conflicts of interest below: No conflict interests are declared.