Therapy, Pharmacoeconomics and Pharmacovigilance

11.4 Lifestyle Modifications in Hypertensives: Who Does it Matter?

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Introduction. Patients are often asked to modify lifestyle and adopt healthier behaviour for prevention and long-term disease management. It is difficult because it means deep and wide life change. But how patients can modify lifestyle if health care professionals don't modify their attitude towards patients? The Hypertension Working Group of Cardarelli Hospital of Naples, Italy in the view of 'transferring' '*Dieci anni di vita in più*' (an educational programme aimed at reducing blood pressure in hypertensive patients through a lifestyle modification) from the hospital to the community, made a survey on the General Practitioners' opinion (GPs) about the patient-centred approach and to identify main concepts and issues inherent to this approach.

Aim. To investigate GPs opinion on the patient-centred approach.

Methods. A twelve question five-point Likert scale questionnaire was developed. Simple descriptive statistics, median and interquartile range (IQR) were performed using SPSS version 15.0.

Results. 57 GPs participated and agreed (median = 4, IQR = 5-4) that the following concepts are crucial: the need of a specific training in counselling (under and post graduate education); the necessity of working with patients to develop mutually agreed-upon goals; the role of information in the decision making process, the ability to understand patients readiness to make change, and to identify barriers to change, the importance to recognize that patients are the experts when it comes to their own behaviour-related issues. For only one item (time dedicated to the consultation) IQR changed (IQR = 4-2) indicating some difficulty in implementing this aspect in practice.

Conclusions. For Benevento community GPs, a patient-centred approach is a useful way to help change and promote behaviour. Knowing how to support it is an important skill for all care professionals, but education is needed to shift from theory to practice.