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Title

Prevalence and risk factors for prescription medication sharing in the UK general population

Priority 1 (Research Category)

Prescribing and pharmacotherapeutics

Presenters

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Abstract

Context: Prescribing of medicines is a major therapeutic intervention occurring largely in primary care. The inappropriate use of prescription medicines has significant resource implications for the health service and is associated with a range of adverse consequences for patients. Sharing prescription medicines is a form of inappropriate medication use. Medication sharing is defined as the lending or borrowing of prescription medicines where the recipient of those medicines is someone other than the person for whom the prescription is intended. Prevalence for borrowing is 5%-52%, and loaning is 6%-23% and not much is known about the prevalence of medication sharing in the UK. Objective: To determine the prevalence of prescription medication practices, better understand contextual factors and beliefs associated with these behaviours and identify risk factors for sharing that are potentially amenable to change. Study design and analysis: A population-based telephone survey with a nationally representative sample of 3000 people.

Population: Adults (≥ 18 years) in the UK

Dataset: The survey captured non-modifiable risk factors including age, gender, ethnicity, highest education level, household size and income alongside medication sharing status (i.e., previous 12 months and/or in their lifetime) and type of medication shared. Hypothetical attitudinal statements with 5-point Likert scale response options were used to capture potentially modifiable behavioural, social, and psychological factors that may contribute to medication sharing practices. Logistic regression was used to examine relationships between medication sharing practices and participants' characteristics and attitudes.

Results: Findings from the multivariate logistic regression analysis will be presented. Relationships between medication sharing status and sociodemographic characteristics, contextual factors and beliefs will be discussed separately for loaning and borrowing behaviour.

Conclusion: Findings will be of considerable value in developing new strategies aimed at reducing the prevalence and adverse consequences of unsafe medication sharing practices.