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INTRODUCTION

USE OF DRUG SAMPLES

- Can pose health risks to patients
- Influences healthcare providers' prescribing behaviour
- Contributes to the increase of healthcare costs by promoting prescription of more expensive newly patented drugs

OBJECTIVE:

- To describe drug sample policies, management, and utilisation in family medicine teaching units (FMTUs) in the Laval University PBRN

METHODS

- **Design:** Cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted in September 2013
- **Participants:** All health professionals (teachers, residents, pharmacists, nurses) using drug samples and those assigned responsibility for drug sample management in 12 FMTUs in the Laval University PBRN, Quebec City
- **Response rate:** 86% (368/430)
- **Instruments:**
 1. Survey completed by users of drug samples
 2. Survey completed by managers of drug samples
 3. Samples inventory grid

RESULTS : SAMPLE MANAGEMENT

ALL FMTUs HAVE SAMPLES

- All 12 FMTUs keep drug samples
- 11 FMTUs have a common storage area for samples
- 10 FMTUs have appointed a nurse or pharmacist to manage drug samples

HALF OF FMTUs HAVE NO DRUG SAMPLE MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 4 apply a regional written policy (regional health centre)
- 3 apply a local written policy (FMTU)
- 5 do not apply any policy

MORE THAN HALF DID NOT KNOW IF THERE WAS ANY WRITTEN POLICY ON DRUG SAMPLES

- 49% unaware of any local policy (FMTU)
- 65% unaware of any regional policy (Regional Health Centre)
- 51% unaware of any criteria for sample selection
- 49% unaware of any list of samples to keep
- 57% unaware of any policy regarding contact between residents and drug representatives

HOWEVER...

293 (80%) respondents agreed that the Department of Family and Emergency Medicine (DFEM) should implement a written policy on drug samples and on contacts with the pharmaceutical industry.

RESULTS: USING DRUG SAMPLES

SAMPLE ARE FREQUENTLY USED

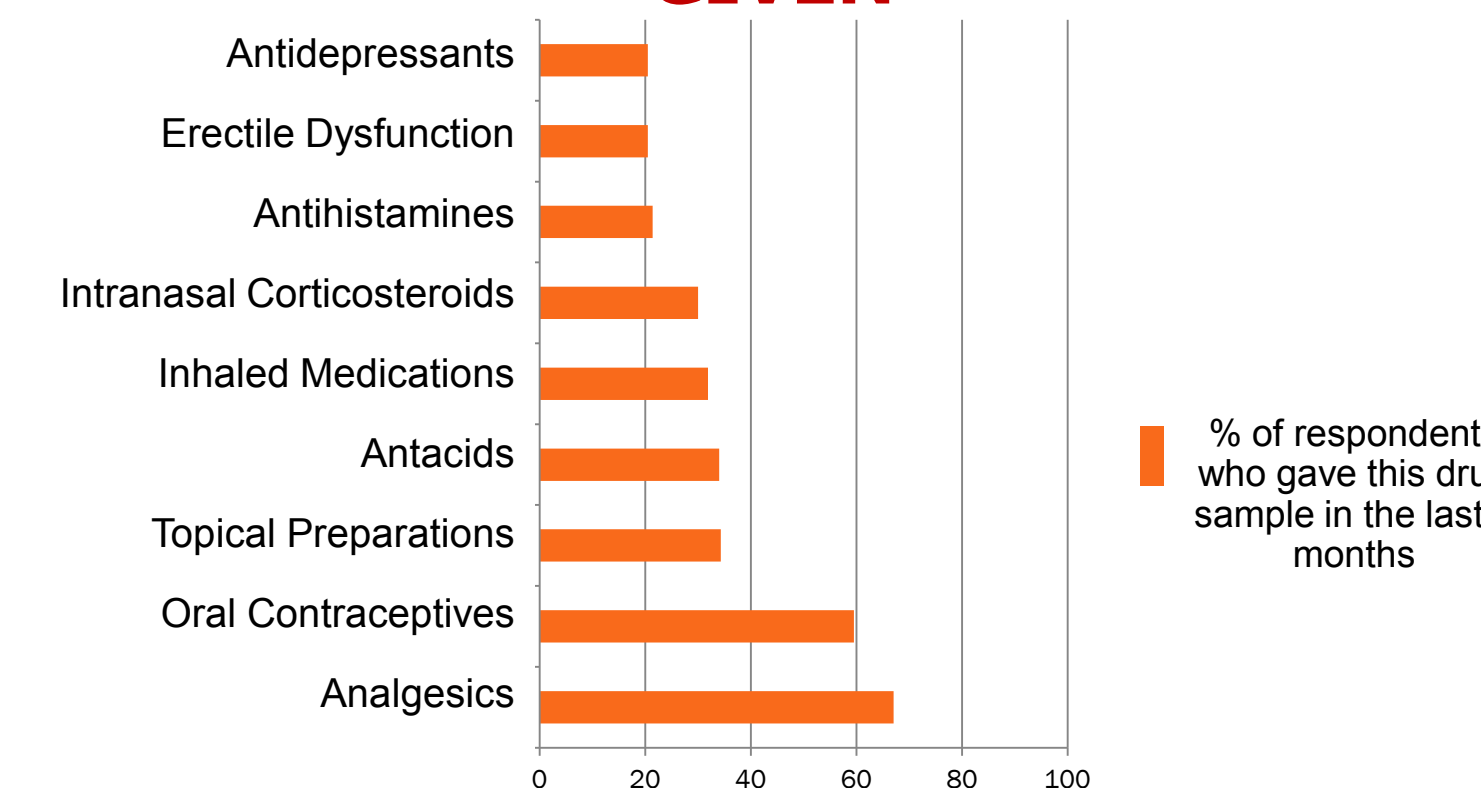
- 217 (59%) respondents give drug samples
- 39% give them at least once a month



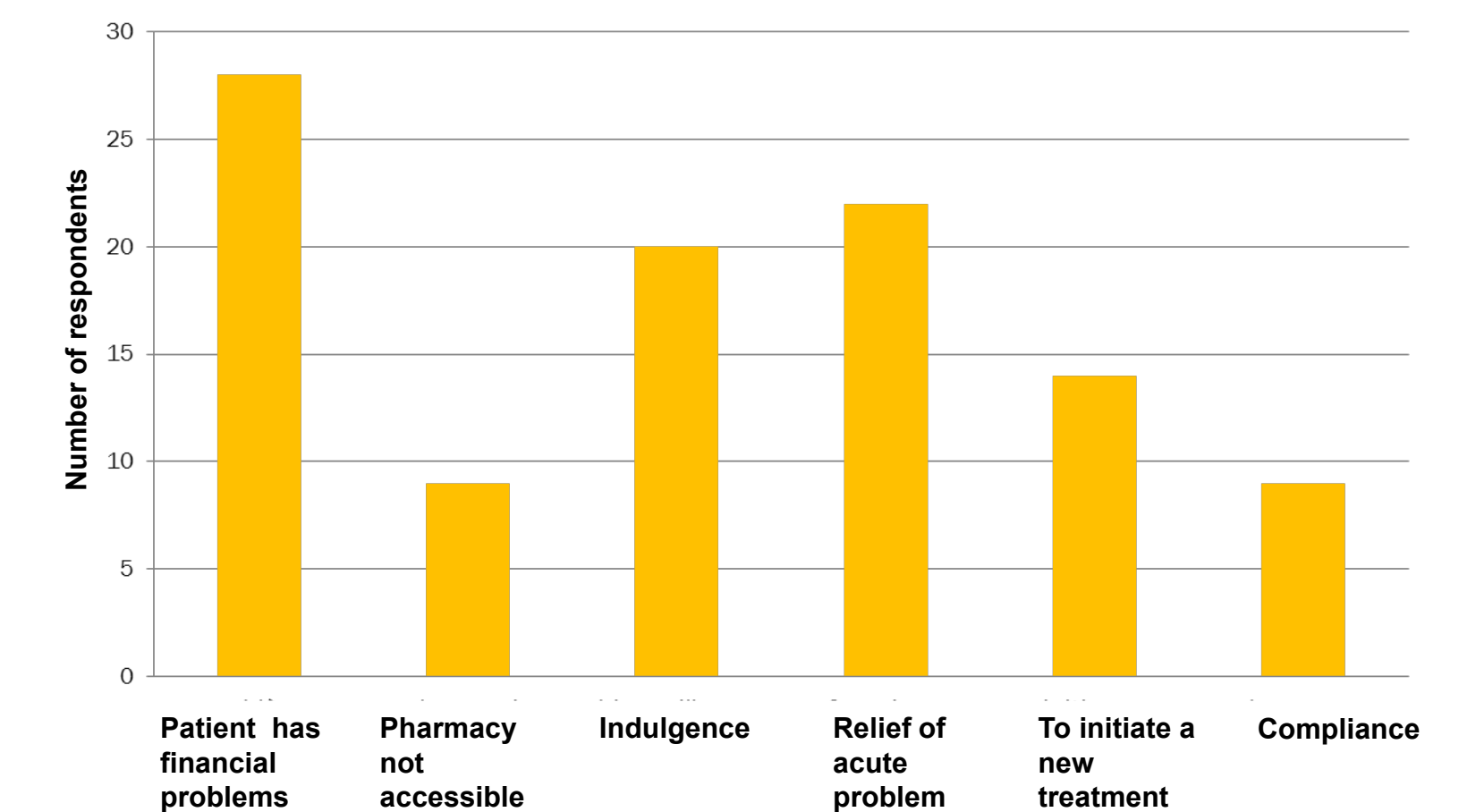
DRUG SAMPLES ARE OFTEN USED INAPPROPRIATELY

- 80% take drug samples for personal use
- 54% provide samples to patients occasionally, even when it is not their first choice drug
- 56% do not always leave a note in the patient's record when giving a sample
- 88% occasionally or rarely refer patients to a pharmacist to provide information about the drug

MOST COMMON DRUG SAMPLES GIVEN



REASONS FOR GIVING A DRUG SAMPLE



CONCLUSION

• Despite written policies in the majority of FMTUs surveyed, drug sample management and use appear inappropriate.

• The DFEM at Laval University should establish a policy on drug sample use and FMTUs should revise their current management and practices accordingly.

Next steps:

- Analysis of inventory of FMTU drug sample cabinets
- Policy analysis and comparison with current practices
- Comparison of Laval University results with other universities in the Province of Québec