



Analysis of Elderly Individuals' Access to and Utilization of Health Services and Prescription Drugs and Their Patterns of Use

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SUMMARY. Socio-demographic profile of elderly and their drug profile utilization help in the reorientation of the health system. Information regarding participants' socio-demographic characteristics, nosology, access/utilization of health services was obtained. A total of 87 elderly individuals were interviewed, mean age was 67.0 years, 54.0 % received 1-4 years of schooling and 70.1 % were users of the public health service. There were approximately 2.1 diseases/patient, with the most common illnesses being related to the circulatory system (83.9 %) and endocrine/nutritional/metabolic systems (25.3 %). A total of 320 drugs were prescribed (3.7 drugs/elderly), of which 92.8 % were for chronic use and 32.2 % were a part of polypharmacy. Analysis of the quality of the prescriptions showed that 15.0 % of the drugs were either over- or under-dosed. These results emphasize the need for the reorientation of pharmacists to focus on patient care, the increased educational level of the prescribers and the better organization of the health system.

KEY WORDS: Aging health, Drug utilization, Elderly, Pharmacoepidemiology.

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