## UNIVERSITY<sup>OF</sup> BIRMINGHAM University of Birmingham Research at Birmingham

# Patients' use of information sources regarding side effects

O'Donovan, Bernadine; Rogers, Ruth; Cox, Anthony; Krska, Janet

*DOI:* 10.1002/pds.4221

License: None: All rights reserved

Document Version Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

O'Donovan, B, Rogers, R, Cox, A & Krska, J 2017, 'Patients' use of information sources regarding side effects', *Pharmacoepidemiology and drug safety*, vol. 26, no. S1, pp. 15-16. https://doi.org/10.1002/pds.4221

Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal

Publisher Rights Statement: Eligibility for repository: Checked on 12/6/2017

#### **General rights**

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

•Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.

•Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.

•User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?) •Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

#### Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

### PATIENTS' USE OF INFORMATION SOURCES REGARDING SIDE EFFECTS

B O'Donovan<sup>1</sup>, RM Rodgers<sup>1</sup>, AR Cox<sup>2</sup>, J Krska<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Medway School of Pharmacy, Universities of Greenwich and Kent
- 2 School of Pharmacy, University of Birmingham

**Background:** Medicine side effects are common, but little is known about the different information sources patients use in identifying suspected side effects and how these are perceived.

**Aim:** To determine the perceived value and use of different information sources to support side effect identification.

**Method:** NHS Ethics approval was granted. A questionnaire was developed and piloted which covered likely use of information sources, plus views on their ease of access, trustworthiness and ease of understanding; experiences of side effects and actual use of information sources in relation to these; and respondent confidence in the association. The questionnaire was distributed to adult customers of pharmacies in Kent and Birmingham, using prescription or non-prescribed medicines in the past six months. Chi-squared tests were used to assess associations and missing data excluded from analysis.

**Results:** A total of 894 questionnaires were distributed and 230 returned (25.7% response rate). Over half the respondents were female (141; 61.3%), 73 (32.0%) were aged below 50, 99 (43.4%) 51 to 70 and 56 (24.6%) above 70 years. Most (193; 84.6%) used at least one medicine regularly and 160 (69.6%) indicated they had experienced at least one side effect from a medicine. Information sources respondents indicated most frequently they would use to find out about a side effect were patient information leaflets (PILs) (194; 85.1%), GPs (192; 84.2%), pharmacists (153; 67.1%), the internet (123; 55.3%) and relatives/friends (73; 32.0%).

While most respondents (180; 78.3%) thought PILs easy to access, fewer considered them trustworthy (135; 59.0%) and 124 (54.1%) easy to understand. In contrast, most people (181; 79.0%) considered GPs trustworthy information sources, but fewer thought them easy to access (95; 41.5%). Pharmacists were judged both easy to access (175; 76.4%) and trustworthy (166; 72.5%). The internet was viewed as easy to access, particularly by younger respondents, but only 34 (14.8%) viewed it as trustworthy. Two-thirds considered both pharmacists and GPs easy to understand, in contrast to hospital doctors (60; 26.2%).

Among those experiencing a side effect, 100 (63.3%) were very confident the effect was due to their medicine and 44 (27.8%) fairly confident; 31 (19.5%) had used only one source to confirm their view, 50 (31.4%) two sources, 53 (33.3%) three sources and 25 (15.7%) more than three. The actual sources used by these respondents differed slightly from their views on the likelihood of using, with GPs being used most frequently (68.6%), followed by PILs (66.7%) the internet (37.7%), pharmacists (27.7%) then relatives/friends (18.2%). Of the 31 using one information source, 19 accessed a healthcare professional, eight used the PIL and four the internet. All but six of those using two or more sources accessed a health professional. Confidence in the association was not associated with the number of sources used or with use of a healthcare professional, but was slightly higher among those using the internet (p<0.05).

**Conclusion:** Most patients experiencing suspected side effects consult a health professional, particularly GPs. PILs and the internet were used more frequently than pharmacists, despite being judged less trustworthy than pharmacists.