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Defining prescription quality indicators at primary care level in Portugal: systematic review and Delphi consultation

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Background & Aim: Prescribing quality indicators (PQI) have been used to assess quality and appropriateness of drug prescription in family medicine practice. This study aims to define a validated and consensual list of PQI to be implemented at Portuguese primary care level.

Method: A systematic review was performed in PubMed and Science Direct databases, for studies published between 01.apr.1998 and 31.jan.2015 with "prescri*", "quality", "indicator" and "valid*" in the Title/Abstract. Additional studies were identified in cross-references and health care guidelines. Two investigators reviewed the selected studies and developed a list of PQI. The list was submitted to a two rounds Delphi panel, consisting of 36 experts including 31 general practitioners (GP) and 5 clinical pharmacologists.

Respondents were asked to rate each indicator against a nine-point Likert scale "To what extent is the indicator suitable for assessing the quality of prescribing?", whereas 1 corresponded to "totally inadequate" and 9 "totally adequate". In the two rounds, the included PQI were scored $\geq$ 7 by least 69% experts.

Results: From a total of 2110 articles, 257 were selected for detailed review. A total of 94 PQI were identified from the review, and 4 proposed by the investigators. A list of 98 PQI was submitted to the experts. Response rate was 72.2%. After the first round, 46 PQI were included together with 8 indicators reformulated with comments from the experts. After the second round, 34 PQI were rated as valid, grouped according to the previously defined dimensions: safety (5), indication (6), necessity/adequacy (18) and cost (5).

Conclusions: A total of 34 PQI were validated by a panel of family physicians and clinical pharmacologists, covering the most relevant domains of prescription decision, namely necessity/adequacy, safety, indication and cost. Validated indicators will now be applied to real-data world, to evaluate its feasibility in the assessment of prescribing quality at primary care level.

Keywords: Prescribing quality indicators, Primary Care, systematic review, Delphi panel.

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