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Knowledge and attitudes of family physicians of Northern Portugal health centers regarding pain

Sara Rocha, C Rodrigues, S Vieira, S Torres, A Mota

(1) UCSP B, Chaves 1, Portugal

(2) UCSB S. Neutel, Chaves 1, Portugal

(3) USF Alpendorada, Marco de Canaveses, Portugal

(4) USF Aldoar, Porto, Portugal

(5) USF Aquae Flaviae, Chaves 2, Portugal

Corresponding author: Dr Sara Rocha, ACES Alto Tâmega E Barroso, UCSP B - Chaves 1, Fafe, Portugal. E-mail: sara_rocha1299@hotmail.com

Introduction: Pain is one of the most frequent problems that health professionals have to deal in their daily practice. The International Association for the Study of Pain defines pain as “an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage or described in terms of such damage”. Pain is a complex subjective experience that is very hard to evaluate. To do that health care providers need to use their knowledge acquired during their academic path, specific formations and scientific events. Yet, many professionals still have difficulty to manage pain accordingly, especially using opioid medications. Aims: To determine the attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of family physicians and interns of Northern Portugal health centers regarding pain.

Methods: It was implemented an online questionnaire based on Ferrell’s instrument: “Knowledge and Attitudes Survey Regarding Pain” throughout June 2015.

Results: A total of 39 surveys were return (45%, 39/86). The typical respondent was a female ages 20-29 having between 2 to 5 years of practice experience. The majority of the professionals doesn’t have any pre or post graduated formation in pain. Knowledge gaps were uncovered in the areas of physical dependence of opioids, sleeping with severe pain, the effectiveness of acetaminophen and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents in the treatment of painful bone metastases, the time peak effect for morphine given orally and the recommended route of administration of opioid analgesics for patients with persistent cancer-related pain.

Conclusion: This survey revealed some gaps on the knowledge and attitudes towards pain by the ACE’s family physicians and provides a valuable insight into the attitudes and knowledge’s about pain of this professionals.