The Medication History
Pharmaceutical care

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Objectives

- ➢ Outline the procedure for obtaining a medication history
- ➢ List types of data to be gathered during the medication history
- ➢ Interview patients to obtain a medication history
- ➢ Document the medication history
- ➢ Differentiate the medication history from the medication experience

The Medication History

- Provides foundation for maximizing medication outcomes
- Allows assessment of:
  - Patient's understanding of drug therapy
  - Efficacy of current and prior drug therapy
  - Adverse effects
  - Allergies

- One component of the complete medical interview
- Task well suited for pharmacists!

Preparing for the Interview

- Review patient information and target the interview
  - Advantages
    - Prior knowledge
    - Pharmacist comfort level
- Disadvantage
  - Important information may be missed
- Interview patient BEFORE learning about history
  - Advantages
    - Unbiased by patient history
- Disadvantages
  - Intimidating
  - Time-consuming

- Taking medication histories. In: Clinical Skills for Pharmacists: A Patient-Focused Approach. Tietze KJ, ed. Mosby-Year Book, Inc., St. Louis, MO, 1997.

Observing the Patient

- General state of health
- Socioeconomic status
- Level of self care
- Adherence with dietary recommendations
- Support system

Demographic Information

- Age
- Height and weight
- Race/ethnicity
- Education
- Occupation
- Lifestyle information

Prescription Medications

- COMPLETE description of each medication
- Name
- Dosage
- Prescribed dosing schedule
- Actual dosing schedule, including usual times
- Reason for therapy
- Duration of therapy
- Effectiveness of therapy
- Assessment of current therapy

- Previous medications – same information

Prescription Medications

- Open-ended questions/statements
  - Name of prescription medications
    - What prescription medications are you taking?
    - What medications do you take that are prescribed by a doctor?
    - Tell me about the prescription medications you take.

  - Prescribed dosing schedule
    - How did the doctor prescribe the medication?
    - What are the directions on the prescription label?

  - Actual dosing schedule
    - When do you take this medication?
    - Tell me about how you take this medication.
    - When did you last take this medication?

Prescription Medications

- Actual use for PRN medications
  - How often do you take this medication?
  - Daily, weekly, or monthly basis?
- Reason for therapy
  - Why do you take this medication?
  - What did the doctor tell you this medication is for?
- Duration of therapy
  - How long have you been taking this medication?
  - What was the reason the medication was stopped?
- Efficacy of therapy
  - How is the medication working for you?
  - How do you know the medicine is working?

OTC Medications

- Similar information to Rx meds
- OTCs, herbals, dietary supplements
- Example questions:
  - What medicines do you take that you do not need a doctor's prescription to buy?
  - What do you take when you have a headache? cold? stomach ache? diarrhea?
  - What herbal medicines or natural remedies do you take?
  - What supplements do you take to improve your diet?
  - What vitamins do you take?

Allergies & Adverse Reactions

- Important to differentiate the two
- Information to obtain
  - Name and dosage of medication
  - Date of allergy/ADR
  - Description of reaction
  - Treatment for reaction
- Example questions:
  - What allergies to medications do you have?
  - What other allergies do you have (e.g., food, latex)?
  - What problems have you experienced with your medicine?
  - Have you ever taken a medication you would rather not take again?

Adherence

- Difficult to assess by direct questioning
- Techniques to assess adherence
  - Gentle probing
  - Sympathetic confrontation
- It is difficult to remember to take your medication all the time.
  - How often do you miss doses of your medication?
  - How many doses of your medicine do you miss per week (month)?
  - For what reason(s) do you miss doses of your medication?
- Nonjudgmental attitude toward nonadherence

Adherence

- Identify reasons for adherence issues
  - Cost
  - Regimen complexity
  - Patient misunderstanding
  - Forgetfulness
  - Perceived lack of efficacy
  - Perceived benefit of treatment
  - Perceived severity of illness
  - Patient beliefs
- Assess effects of nonadherence on efficacy
- Identify tools or techniques to assist with adherence

Health Behaviors

- Relevant to current disease states and treatment
- Diet – e.g., for patients with DM or HTN
  - What type of special diet do you follow?
  - What types of dietary restrictions do you have?
- Exercise
  - What exercise routine do you
- Social habits
  - Alcohol
  - Tobacco
  - Caffeine
  - Illicit drug use

Social Habits

- Alcohol
  - How many alcoholic beverages do you drink per day (week)?
  - How often do you drink alcohol?
  - CAGE questionnaire

- CAGE questionnaire
  - Have you ever felt you needed to Cut down on your drinking?
  - Have people Annoyed you by criticizing your drinking?
  - Have you ever felt bad or Guilty about your drinking?
  - Have you ever had a drink first thing in the morning to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover ("Eye-opener")?

Social Habits

- Tobacco
  - How many cigarettes do you smoke per day?
  - At what age did you begin smoking?
  - Pack-years = packs per day X number of years
- Caffeine
  - How many caffeinated beverages like coffee, tea, or soda do you drink per day?
- Illicit "street" drugs
  - What types of street drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, etc., have you/do you use?

Other Health Issues

- What other health problems or concerns do you have that we have not discussed?

- What have you done to manage/treat those problems?

- How has that worked for you?

Other Questions to Consider

- What pharmacy/pharmacies do you use?
- What patches (drops, inhalers, creams) do you use?
- What injections have you received?
- What medications do you take for….?
- What sample medications has your doctor given you?
- What study or investigational drugs are you taking?
- What antibiotics have you used in the last 3 months?
- What problems or concerns do you have with your medication?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your medications that I have not asked?

Successful History Taking

- Always record the date and time of the history
- Use a systematic approach
- Explain the importance of having an accurate medication history

- Use open-ended questions
- Do not interrupt the patient
- Discuss one topic at a time
- Use transition statements

- Do not speak slowly or mumble

Documenting the Medication History

- Standardized format (institution specific)
  - Easy to complete
  - Lack of flexibility
  - Space considerations
- SOAP format
  - Organized
  - More flexible
  - May be repetitious
- Freestyle format
  - Most flexible
  - Critical info more likely to be missing

The Medication Experience

- Sum of all the experiences a patient has related to drug therapy
- Attitudes and beliefs about medications
- Powerful effect on medication outcomes
- Very important piece of information

Cipolle RJ, Strand LM, Morley PC. The Patient's Medication Experience. In: Pharmaceutical Care Practice:

Components of the Medication Experience

- Patient's experience with medications
- Comprehensive medication history
- Complete record of current medications

Patient Experience

- What is your attitude toward taking medication?
- What do you want/expect from your medications?
- What concerns do you have about your drug therapy?

- What understanding does the patient have of his/her medication regimen?
- What cultural, religious, or ethical issues may affect the medication taking behavior?

Cipolle RJ, Strand LM, Morley PC. The Patient's Medication Experience. In: Pharmaceutical Care Practice: The Clinician's Guide, 2e: Cipolle RJ, Strand LM, Morley PC, eds.

Summary

- Types of data in the complete medication history
- Open-ended questions to obtain data
- Documentation styles for the medication history
- Medication history vs. medication experience