Abstract

Background The paradigm shift from a paternalistic care model to the model of patient-centered care led to a change in the perspective about relevant outcome parameters with patient reported outcomes (PROs) especially the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) getting more and more important. However, many clinical trials assessing the HRQoL have failed to meet good scientific standards. To still combine the duality of therapeutic benefit and benefit for the patient, another patient-centered endpoint, the so called 'patient preferences' (PP), were brought into focus. The concept of PP is adapted from market and consumer research and refers to the question what attributes of a medicinal product patients would prefer if they have the choice between at least two alternatives. This preference based approach intends to increase patient satisfaction, drug adherence and in the final instance, medical outcomes.

Objective This study sought to characterize the present state of generating PP information and its usage in decision-making processes in the medicinal product life cycle and hence to give an overview of the current standards, perceptions and sentiments regarding this topic in the healthcare community.

Methods Data was acquired through ten qualitative guideline oriented interviews with eleven different stakeholders. The interviews were evaluated according to standards of a qualitative content analysis.

Results The findings highlight a common interest in increasing the usage of PP information in the medicinal product life cycle, but showed that certain steps have to be taken before this becomes reality. All stakeholders see more advantages than disadvantages, however expertise and research in this field is still limited. Several determinants of practice were identified which influence the generation and usage of PP information.

Conclusion PP are not systematically implemented in the medicinal product life cycle yet. This contrasts the strong movement towards patient involvement in healthcare. From this perspective, patients and their preferences appear to play a minor role for innovative medicinal product development. But the main barriers are regulatory instances, non-existence of methodological standards and a lack of cooperation in healthcare.