

Reflection over prescribing patterns reduced prescription rates for antibiotics against respiratory tract infections in western Sweden

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Background

Overuse of antibiotics is a matter of great concern globally. In Sweden 90 % of antibiotics are prescribed in the outpatient settings, mainly by general practitioners (GP). Region Västra Götaland consists of a population of 1.6 million, attended by 202 primary care health centers (PCHC). The region is one of the highest prescribing regions in Sweden, and approximately 60% of these formulas are dispatched for respiratory tract infections (RTI).

The Swedish strategic program against antibiotic resistance (Strama) in Region Västra Götaland launched a short campaign in November 2012 and followed up by visiting PCHC to inform about the growing antibiotic resistance. To further strengthen this work an educational program towards GPs was launched in Mars-August 2013.

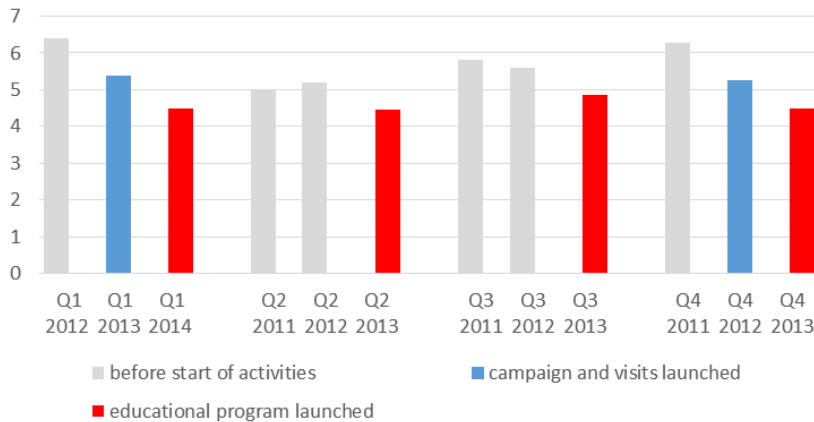
Results

During April-September 2013 prescription rates from PCHC dropped by 12% as compared to the same period the year before. Rates decreased evenly for both gender and all age-groups and primarily for antibiotics against RTI (90%), such as penicillin (49%) and tetracycline (20%).

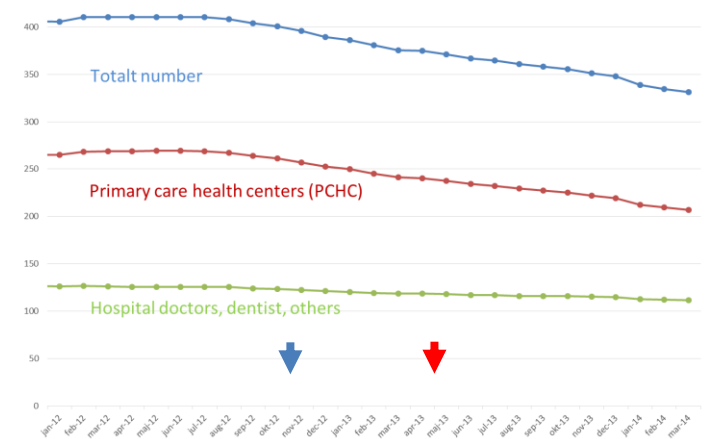
The most constant findings for improvements were:

- Compliance to guidelines need to be enhanced
- RM with colleagues was appreciated
- All personnel, not only doctors must be informed about new guidelines
- All aspects of caring for infectious patients, including all categories of health personnel, must be improved
- The framework of the PCHC greatly influenced prescribing patterns

mean number prescriptions/100 patients and PHCH



Number of prescriptions/1000 inhabitants in Region Västra Götaland
Kumulativ numbers previous 12 months



Materials and Methods

Strama invited one GP from each center to a half-day workshop education (March-May) and supplemented education material so that the GP in turn could host a reflecting meeting (RM, April-August) with his/hers colleagues at the PHCH. The RM included reflection of prescribing pattern for each colleague in relation to each others as well as for other PCHC in the region and Sweden as a whole. Case discussions dealt with new guidelines against RTI. A written report was sent to Strama describing mechanisms for the prescription rate of the PCHC and possible inappropriate prescribing, including strategies for improvement. For this effort a minor economic endorsement was given. All the reports were condensed to a feed-back report returned to the PCHC from Strama. A GP from 176/202 PCHC was educated and reflecting meetings were held at 92 % (186) of the PHCH. Altogether 1000 GPs had considered their own prescribing data and participated in a RM.

Conclusion

Awareness of prescribing pattern and reflection together with trusted colleagues was an appreciated educational method. It resulted in marked reduction of prescribed antibiotics for RTI.