ATTITUDES OF PATIENTS TOWARD GENERIC SUBSTITUTION AND IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE IN SLOVAKIA: FIRST RESULTS FROM ADOPTING THE LAW IN 2012

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OBJECTIVES
In December 2011 was adopted in Slovakia new drug law that among other new rules and changes defines list of molecules for mandatory generic substitution. It was one of the key cost-containment measure applied in 2012 at the field of national drug policy. We prepared, executed and evaluated special questionnaire on statistically selected sample of patients in Slovakia to detect current attitude, knowledge and believes toward generic substitution (GS).

METHODS
We created special questions for patients and distributed it in selected regions in Slovakia. From 600 questionnaires, we evaluated 432. Questionnaires were distributed among patients visiting pharmacies in 2013/2014 and all patients were older than 20 years.

RESULTS
There were 57% of women in our sample and only 11% from all patients had lower than college education. 71% of all patients were using prescription drugs regularly and 58% of all patients were familiar with term GS. Surprisingly, only 16% from all patients selected co-payment as the key factor influencing their decision toward GS. Recommendation of GS in pharmacy or by doctor was selected as key factor that influenced patients in choosing GS or generic molecule (40%). Second most influential factor was own experience with generic (27%). Only 8% of patients believed that GS can decrease overall consumption of drugs. We also found out that 36% of patients consider GS as “risky” because of extended number of generics available from various previously unknown companies. There was also a strong statistical relationship between gender and positives as well as negatives of GS among patients.

CONCLUSIONS
Based on our research among patients we conclude that generic substitution is most likely effective drug policy tool, but since there are also many negative experiences (own or shared) with generic drugs, GS is still considered as alternative option.

Distribution of responders according to their education

Distribution of responders according to gender

“Generic Substitution” term knowledge among responders

Patients’ experience with generic substitution offered by medical doctor or pharmacists

Generic drug usage during last 3 months

Factors influencing drug choice by patients

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