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Assessing pain in hospital in-patients: a cross-sectional study in Tuscany, Italy

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Source

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Abstract

Guidelines Towards a Pain-Free Hospital, published in 2001 in Italy, determined an increasing spread of No-Pain Hospital Committees across the country and supported a more effective pain control in hospital. However, few hospitals adopted such protocols. To date, a thorough investigation on quality of pain management documentation is lacking. The present survey aimed to evaluate the quality of pain management documentation reported in medical and hospital discharge records. The study reviewed records of 2,459 patients discharged every Wednesday of November 2006 in 29 Tuscany hospitals. Among 2,459 patients, 51.5 % were males. Patients were aged between 0 and 90 years or above and were mostly (24.93 %) between 70 and 79 years; most of them (47.1 %) were hospitalized in Medicine ward. At hospital admission, less than half of examined records (40.3 %) reported pain-related items, and only 8.1 % reported how it was treated. During hospitalization, 39.6 % of the records reported the use of scales for measuring pain intensity and 49.7 % reported the pharmacological therapy. The present study highlights the lack of an exhaustive documentation of pain recording and management in the hospital setting. Therefore, healthcare providers should pay close attention to this relevant issue, and the quality of such documentation should be constantly monitored.