

Inhaler Retail Sales Differ in European Countries

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INTRODUCTION

Obstructive lung diseases are still not controlled, despite the introduction of effective drugs and comprehensive treatment guidelines. The inability of patients to use their inhalers correctly is one possible explanation: for example, up to 50% of patients misuse pressurised metered dose inhalers (pMDI), resulting in decreased therapeutic efficacy. In order to see how prescribing practice might potentially influence the delivery of drugs for inhalation, we studied retail sales data for all inhaled medication (pMDI/DPI/nebuliser solutions for ICS, LABA, SABA and combinations) prescribed in several different European countries.

METHODS

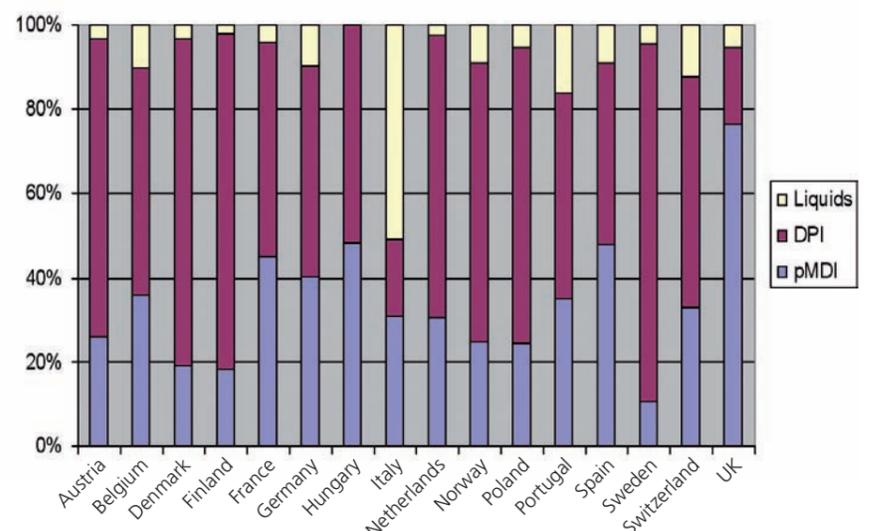
Data were obtained by fully assorted wholesalers regarding stock sales to retail pharmacies, evaluation of purchases of panel pharmacies regarding their purchases not from fully assorted wholesalers but from pharmaceutical manufacturers, from specialist wholesalers and distribution cooperatives within one calendar month. (IMS data 2005).

RESULTS

In the considered European countries, pMDIs, DPIs and solutions for nebulisers accounted for means pMDI was 33%, for DPIs 55% and for nebulizers 12% of the total sales respectively.

Interestingly, the patterns of inhaler retail sales differed markedly between countries. The UK stood out in terms of extraordinarily high sales of pMDIs as compared with DPIs, followed by Spain, Hungary and France. The use of drugs administered by nebuliser was extraordinarily high in Italy.

European Inhaler retail sales data



CONCLUSIONS

Since pMDIs in particular have frequently been shown to be more prone to inefficient drug delivery with improper use, it is of some concern that there is still a relatively high usage of these devices in several European countries. A range of influences, such as cost, health insurance issues, pharmaceutical/commercial aspects and prescribers' and patients' preferences are likely to play a role. These data suggest a need for more uniformised prescribing practice across Europe, and for better education about the advantages and limitations of specific devices for prescribers and patients to improve the treatment of obstructive airways diseases in Europe.