

The use of Motivational Interviewing for life style change among customers at the Swedish Pharmacies

Lena Lindhe Söderlund¹ and Kjell Johansson²

Background: The pharmacies in Sweden (Apoteket AB) are perceived as independent and impartial providers of health information. This put demands on the pharmacists concerning adaptation of the communication to the customers needs. One method designed to take this into account is Motivational Interviewing (MI) which has been successfully used for initiating life style change concerning alcohol habits, smoking cessation, and physical activity.

Aim: The first aim of this study was to describe to what extent MI was used in life style counselling at the pharmacies, after staff's participation in MI-education. A second aim was to describe the customer's opinion about life style counselling at the pharmacy using MI. A third aim was to study the effect of MI life style counselling on customers life style habits.

Method and material: Two pharmacists with MI-education performed the life style counselling. The customers participating in the counselling were 11 men and 11 women, with a mean age of 62 years. The counselling was performed in the open area in the pharmacies and the counselling was audio taped. The counselling lasted 10 to 30 minutes and it begun with testing the participants' blood pressure. Immediately after the counselling, the participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire concerning their attitudes toward the counselling. After twelve weeks the participants were contacted and semi structured telephone interviews were performed. In connection to the interviews, the participants were asked to go to the pharmacy again to test their blood pressure a second time. The two participating pharmacist selected six of the 22 performed counsellings to be analysed concerning expressed empathy and MI-spirit by specialists at Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. The study was carried out during 2005 at two pharmacies in the county of Östergötland, Sweden.

Results:

MI- content in the counsellings: On seven point Likert-scales, the mean rating concerning empathy in the counsellings was 5 on empathy and 5 on MI-spirit which is above the acceptable level for MI counsellings.

Changes in blood pressure: The participants mean blood pressure at the counselling was 161/88. At the twelve weeks follow up, the mean blood pressure was 157/87,

¹ Centre for Public Health Sciences, County of Östergötland, Sweden
lena.lindhe-soderlund@lio.se

² Institution of Health and Society, Linköpings Universitet, Sweden

which is a non-significant change. A somewhat bigger change in blood pressure was found among the participants who had increased their physical activity.

Attitudes toward alcohol discussions at the pharmacy: The participants differed in their opinions concerning the relevance and the benefits of alcohol information at the pharmacy. Generally, they perceive alcohol information as valuable but they perceived it as a risk that you will be embarrassed if you have alcohol problems.

General opinions about the MI-counselling: A majority of the participants perceived that they were met by a good listener at the counselling who was engaged in their life style situation. They also perceived the discussions about life style and blood pressure as important.

Life style change: Changes in diet was the most commonly expressed intention, followed by physical activity. The confidence in the ability to make life style change differed among the participants and there were differences in the perceptions of ways to do this, but a majority thought that they would succeed and a majority had already changed their life style at the follow up. None of the participants had the intention to change their alcohol habits but three had despite this changed their habits at the follow up.

Conclusion: The results from this study indicate that life style counselling at the pharmacy by pharmacists using Motivational Interviewing, can influence the customers' life style habits. Important conditions are that the pharmacists have good counselling competence and the customers have motivation to discuss their life style. However, further research is needed to confirm these findings.

Keywords: Motivational Interviewing, pharmacy, life style counselling, blood pressure, alcohol