

Development of an assessment tool for pharmacy and therapeutics committees and subsequent pilot testing to identify improvement opportunities for the University Hospital Zurich

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Abstract

Background: Pharmacy and therapeutics committees (PTCs) are multidisciplinary hospital teams responsible for promoting rational medication use. They evaluate medications for inclusion into the hospital's drug formulary, a list of medications that should preferably be prescribed. Well-implemented PTCs were found to positively influence the rational use of medications in hospitals. In Switzerland, there is no widely used tool to assess PTCs. We aimed to develop an assessment tool for PTCs and pilot test it at the University Hospital Zurich (USZ). Based on the assessment, we intended to identify improvement opportunities for the USZ's PTC.

Methods: We used a literature search in PubMed and Embase to identify publications assessing or describing PTCs. The included publications were examined for possible PTCs assessment items. We weighted the identified items, using a specially developed weighting system, and included all with a weight ≥ 30 in the assessment tool. We pilot tested the tool at the USZ by reviewing available documentation and interviewing a PTC member. Based on the assessment, we conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis to identify improvement opportunities for the USZ's PTC.

Results: We found 1382 publications, 101 of which were included and identified 101 potential assessment items, 60 of which composed the tool. The items were grouped into topics: PTC's institutional integration, member characteristics, performance indicators, meeting structure, formulary decision-making, formulary characteristics, strategies to guide formulary medication use, and medication use evaluations. Identified improvement opportunities for the USZ's PTC were adapting the structure of the PTC, improving the formulary decision-making, implementing strategies to guide formulary medication use, and strengthening the recognition of the PTC to increase patient safety.

Conclusions: The assessment tool was successfully applied in combination with a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis to identify improvement opportunities for a PTC. After further consolidation, the tool could be used in other Swiss hospitals, possibly having a positive impact on rational medication use.