Self-health promotion and prevention by general practitioners

comparisons with general population
GPs seem to neglect their own health

Higher risk of physical and mental health problems

Health care system outcomes
- Lowered productivity and efficiency
- Recruitment and retention outcomes

Patient outcomes
- Suboptimal quality of patient care
- Reduced patient adherence and satisfaction
- Increased risk of medical errors
Higher risk of physical and mental health problems

Research

MENTAL HEALTH

Physical health
To compare the GPs’ and general population’s behaviour in health promotion, prevention and seeing a GP.
Questionnaire

Self-administrated questionnaire

Based on the Health Survey of Belgian Institute of Public Health

- « Health behaviour and lifestyle »
- « Utilisation of health services »
- « Prevention »

+ 3 questions about

- Characteristics of their own GP
- Seeing a doctor in case of illness
- Prescription

+ 2 demographic questions
Population

All GPs (156) from one district of French-speaking part of Belgium (Namur)
Analysis

Analysis with SPSS

Chi-square statistical tests were used to compare GPs’ and general population’s results.

The physical activity level (PAL) was calculated on the basis of 2 questions (related to the duration of moderate and intensive physical activity).

Descriptive statistics were presented for the questions about the characteristics of their own GP, prescription and seeing a doctor in case of illness.
113 GPs participated in the study

Response rate was 72.4%

There were representative in terms of age and gender.

3 chapters

- Self-health promotion
- Prevention
- Utilisation of health care system
**Self-health promotion**

**Physical activity level**

- Not enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk and avoid an excess weight gain
- Enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk but not to avoid an excess weight gain
- Enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk and avoid an excess weight gain
Self-health promotion

Physical activity level

- GPs
- Belgian population

- Not enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk and avoid an excess weight gain
- Enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk but not to avoid an excess weight gain
- Enough to positively impact the cardiovascular risk and avoid an excess weight gain
Nutrition habits

- **Consumption of fruits and vegetables**
  - GPs
    - < 5 fruits and vegetables: 0%
    - ≥ 5 fruits and vegetables: 100%

- **Consumption of water**
  - GPs
    - < 1l: 0%
    - > 1l: 50%

- **Consumption of dairy products**
  - GPs
    - No dairy products every day: 50%
    - Dairy products every day: 0%

- **Consumption of sugary snacks**
  - GPs
    - No sugary snack every day: 0%
    - Sugary snacks every day: 100%

- **Having a breakfast**
  - GPs
    - Every day: 0%
    - No every day: 100%
**Nutrition habits**

- **Consumption of fruits and vegetables**
  - GPs: 100%
  - Belgian Population: 50%

- **Consumption of water**
  - GPs: 50%
  - Belgian Population: 50%

- **Consumption of dairy products**
  - GPs: 100%
  - Belgian Population: 50%

- **Consumption of sugary snacks**
  - GPs: 0%
  - Belgian Population: 50%
Consumption of alcohol, tobacco

**Consumption of alcohol**

- No risky consumption
- Risky consumption

**Consumption of tobacco**

- Non-smokers
- Occasional smokers
- Daily smokers
Consumption of alcohol, tobacco

**Consumption of alcohol**

- **GPs:** All showed no risky consumption.
- **Belgian population:** A small percentage showed risky consumption.

**Consumption of tobacco**

- **GPs:** A small percentage are non-smokers, occasional smokers, and daily smokers.
- **Belgian population:** A larger percentage are non-smokers, with a smaller percentage being occasional smokers and the smallest percentage being daily smokers.

*P < 0.001*
**Self-health promotion**

**Consumption of drugs**

**Consumption of anxiolytics, hypnotics or sedatives**

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

GPs

- No consumption during past year
- Consumption during past year

**Consumption of antidepressants**

GPs

- No consumption during past year
- Consumption during past year

**Consumption of illicit drugs**

GPs

- No consumption during past year
- Consumption during past year
Consumption of drugs

**Consumption of anxiolytics, hypnotics or sedatives**

- **GPs**: 100% no consumption during past year
- **Belgian population**: 100% no consumption during past year

**P<0.001**

**Consumption of antidepressants**

- **GPs**: 100% no consumption during past year
- **Belgian population**: 100% no consumption during past year

**Consumption of illicit drugs**

- **GPs**: 100% no consumption during past year
- **Belgian population**: 100% no consumption during past year

**No consumption during past year**

**Consumption during past year**
**Prevention**

### Screening for colorectal cancer
- **GPs from 50 years old**
  - Regular screening: 60%
  - No regular screening: 40%

### Screening for breast cancer
- **Women GPs from 50 years old**
  - Regular screening: 80%
  - No regular screening: 20%

### Screening for cervical cancer
- **Women GPs**
  - Regular screening: 70%
  - No regular screening: 30%
Prevention

Screening for colorectal cancer
GPs from 50 years old

Screening for breast cancer
Women GPs from 50 years old

Screening for cervical cancer
Women GPs

P<0.001
Prevention

Screening for hypertension

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<th>&lt; 5 years</th>
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<th>Never</th>
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<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Screening for hypercholesterolaemia

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Screening for hyperglycemia

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<tr>
<td>GPs</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Prevention

**Screening for hypertension**

- **GPs**: 100% screening
- **Belgian population**: 90% screening

**Screening for hypercholesterolaemia**

- **GPs**: 95% screening
- **Belgian population**: 85% screening

**Screening for hyperglycemia**

- **GPs**: 90% screening
- **Belgian population**: 80% screening

**Results**

- **P < 0.005** for GPs vs. Belgian population
- **P < 0.001** for all screening categories
Utilisation of health care system

Having a GP

![Bar chart showing the percentage of GPs and the Belgian population with and without a GP. The chart indicates a P<0.0001 significance.]
Utilisation of health care system

Characteristics of their GPs
- GP with a therapeutic distance
- A friend or a direct colleague
- No GP

In case of illness
- See their own GP
- See a friend or a direct colleague
- See a medical specialist
- Treat themselves
- Don’t treat at all

Prescriptions
- By their GP
- By a friend or a direct colleague
- By themselves
Most of them followed the recommendations about:

- Cancer screening
- Screening of cardiovascular risk factors
- Consumption of alcohol and tobacco

Most of them didn’t follow the recommendations about:

- Some aspects of nutrition
- Sport

More consumption of anxiolytics, hypnotics or sedatives

(colorectal cancer)
Most of them

• Didn’t have a GP
• Didn’t see a GP in case of illness
• Practised self-prescription
Better knowledge
Better general awareness

Lack of time?
Other factors?
Strengths

• One of the rare studies about self-health promotion
• Included several aspects of health promotion and prevention
• High response rate

Weaknesses

• Small sample
• Reference population with several differences from the studied population (ex: socioeconomic, age, ...)

Discussion
Perspectives for research

• Qualitative research to better understand why GPs don’t follow the recommendations in nutrition and physical activity
• Quantitative research to extend this study and verify the applicability of our results in a broader sample.

Perspectives for actions

• To raise consciousness of self-health promotion and its impact on quality of care
• To encourage GPs to have their own GP
Thank you for your attention