Patient information support helpline

Ana Ribeiro, Secretary, Portuguese League against Rheumatic Diseases, Portugal



Background

- LPCDR is frequently contacted by people affected by rheumatic diseases (patients, caregivers and family members) for support and information, which are usually provided by 3 volunteers and by the secretary.
- All contacts, made via phone and/or email, are tracked until the situation is considered solved.
- With the COVID-19 pandemic, additional efforts were made to provide accurate information, gathering additional volunteers from the rheumatology community.



Aims

Since providing support is one of our values, we took the opportunity to analyse how we were addressing the requests and what improvements could be made.



Methods

We analysed our key performance indicators (KPIs) and statistics for:

- ✓ COVID-19 related information and communication (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2)
- Standard on demand support and information (Fig. 3)





Contacts for support & key areas of information requests



Fig. 3 — Standard on demand support and information

- LPCDR communication strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic has increased our outreach in social media:
 - ✓ Compared to 2019, LPCDR YouTube Channel subscribers doubled in 2020 and tripled in 2021
 - ✓ 5/6 Newsletters were addressing COVID-19 issues
- Standard on demand support and information offer was not overwhelmed by COVID-19 issues:
 - HPRs & Rheumatologists were engaged as volunteers to deal with the pandemic specific issues
 - The key areas of support requests remain related to information on RMDs, healthcare services and consultations, medication and Social Support and work-related issues
- There is a preference for contacting the office instead of the volunteers:
 - Providing accurate information and proper support is time consuming and impacts administrative tasks



_ Conclus

From the results and considering that COVID-19 has had a strong effect on phone usage, LPCDR has a pilot project to create a Helpline:

LPCDR's landline phone will work as a professional phone center, with an automatic answering and call forwarding option, to health professionals, volunteers (Peer counseling), social worker or legal support, for clarification of doubts.

Next steps:

- To establish a team of dedicated volunteers with health professionals, social workers and lawyers for the helpline
- Training planning, preparation of the Helpline's volunteer support manual and arrangements for technological equipment and telephone service
- To be launched in early 2022 and evaluated after 1 year according to

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Answering ≥100 calls

Recruiting ≥20 new members

User satisfaction (=Good/Very Good)

Satisfaction of the team (=Good/Very Good)

