THE PHARMASEARCH NETWORK. A PROJECT OF PHARMACOVIGILANCE IN ITALY

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AIMS
This project was set up to stimulate spontaneous reporting of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADR), to improve the quality of ADR reports and to provide continuing education on drug safety and its correct use.

MATERIAL AND METHODS
Since January 1st 2002, a collaboration started between the Department of Medicine and Pharmacology of University of Messina (Co-ordinating centre) and a group of GPs belonging to the Italian College of General Practitioners - SIMG (246 till January 31th 2003). A network of reporters (called PharmaSearch network) was created; they were asked to send to the Co-ordinating centre a copy of each ADR reporting form sent to the relevant office, as required by law. The Co-ordinating centre provides the physician with a personal and qualified comment to the ADR reported via e-mail, according to data retrieved from international literature (personalised feedback). Furthermore, every physician receives monthly, quarterly and yearly bulletins about the state of art of the network, together with periodic elaborations, comparing data collected to signals of alarm coming from literature, eg. neuropsychiatric reactions associated with Coxibs (collective feedback).

RESULTS
In the 1st year, 564 ADRs were reported; 48 (8,5%) were severe, and 72 (12,8%) were not described in the explanatory leaflet. In 144 reports (25,5%) new drugs were implicated. Patients over 65 years accounted for 45,9% of this series. 68,2% of patients was female. Over 63% of patients were in polytherapy. Digestive tract (17,6%), skin (16,4%) and central and peripheral nervous system were most commonly body systems involved in ADRs.

CONCLUSION
The PharmaSearch network showed to be a valid tool to involve a growing number of GPs in the pharmacovigilance system. Preliminary elaborations also confirmed its importance and representativeness for future analysis on the safety of single drugs or pharmacological classes.

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