History of Development and Usage of Pharmaceutical Pictograms in Czechoslovakia

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Changes in pharmacy practice

- Pharmacy activities and pharmacists' role significantly changed in 20th century
- Decreasing number of medicines compounded at pharmacies, increasing number of massproduced medicines
- A lot of new drugs appeared, the knowledge on medicines grew as well

Changes in pharmacy practice

 A need to instruct patients how to use medicines correctly (administration, side effects, drug-food or drug-drug interactions) has emerged

 Aim: higher effectivity and safety of pharmacotherapy

Changes in pharmacy practice

- Pharmacist a producer of medicines became a distributor of mass-produced drugs and then a distributor of information on all aspects coupled with medicines
- New approaches and devices to simplify pharmacist's new role had been ivestigated
- Workers of Faculties of Pharmacy and Pharmacy Development Centre (PDC) were engaged in this topic in former Czechoslovakia

Development of Pharmaceutical Pictograms

 1977 – Smečka, Neuwirth et al. (Faculty of Pharmacy of Charles University) published an intention to use special pictorial symbols – pharmaceutical pictograms – to express information on medicines

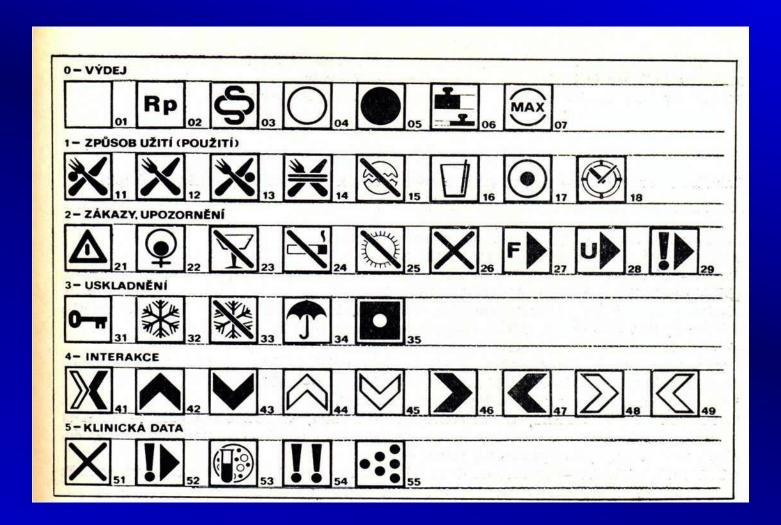
 The information repeat and can be expressed briefly by combination of appropriate pictograms

Development of Pharmaceutical Pictograms

 1978 – Smečka's team proposed a set of 43 pictograms and discussed their practical usage.
 They elaborated their work in the next years

 The pictograms were divided into 6 information groups: instructions for dispensation, use, bans and warnings, storage, interactions, clinical data

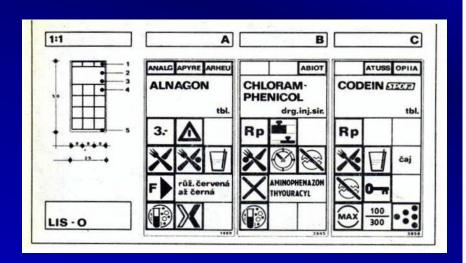
Smečka's picotgrams:

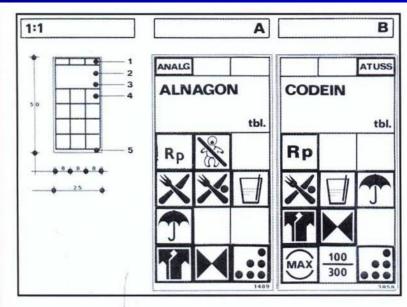


The support of pharmacist's memory during dispensation

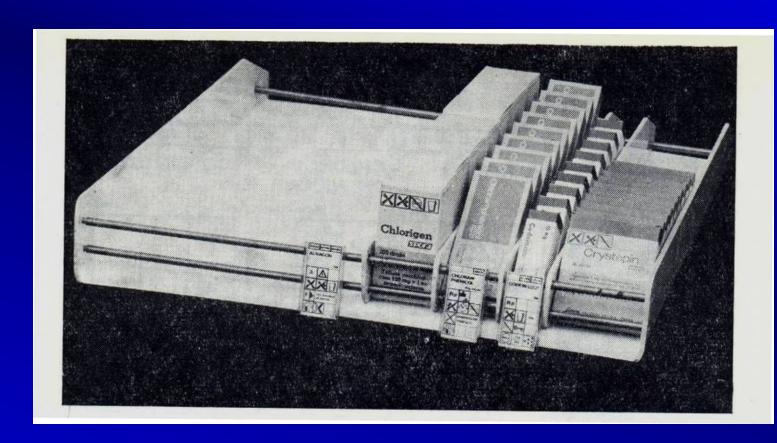
a) Small cards displaying appropriate pictograms placed on front edges of shelves with drugs in pharmacy

Small card with pictograms:





A shelf with information small cards:



A shelf with information small cards:



- b) An information booklet of PDC published in 1981
- It contained pictographic information about cca 500 medicines and could have been used for rapid information retrieval during dispensation
- Issued as a supplement to "Bulletin of PDC" and distributed to all Czechoslovak pharmacies
- A modified set of 35 pictograms was used

PDC's information booklet:



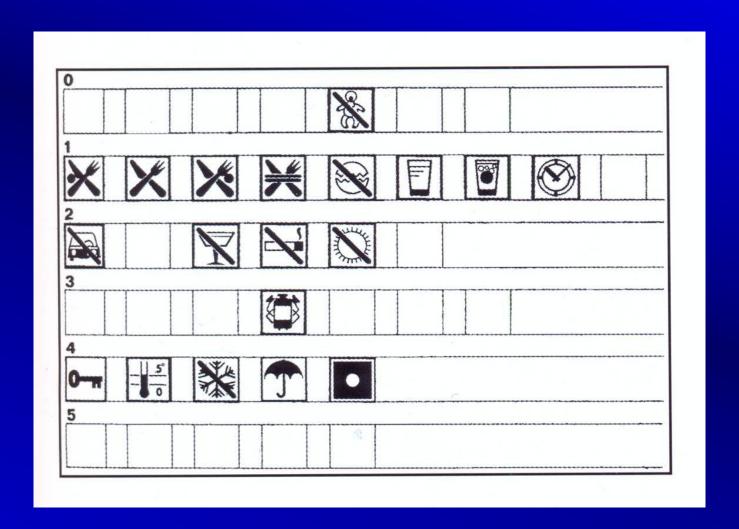
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The paper booklet was considered as a provisional solution

 Some other possibilities were tested: a card index containing basic pictographic information completed with more detailed written data or microfiche readers

- 2. Pictograms for patients
- The next proposed application was to print pictograms on wraps and packings of medicines
- A patient had instructions for proper medicine usage and storage in a simple form
- Only pictograms understandable to patients (13-19 pictograms) could be used and only general information could be displayed

Pictograms understandable to patients:



Packings with pictographic information:



Packings with pictographic information:



- Only 26 % of Czechoslovak mass-produced drugs for oral use contained a patient information leaflet in 1980. The leaflets were/are often hard understandable to patients
- To use pictograms this way could lead to better usage of medicines too

 The Smečka's pictograms attracted attention abroad

International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP)
repeatedly pursued the pictograms. FIP
considered to use pictographic information
especially for illiterate patients in developing
countries

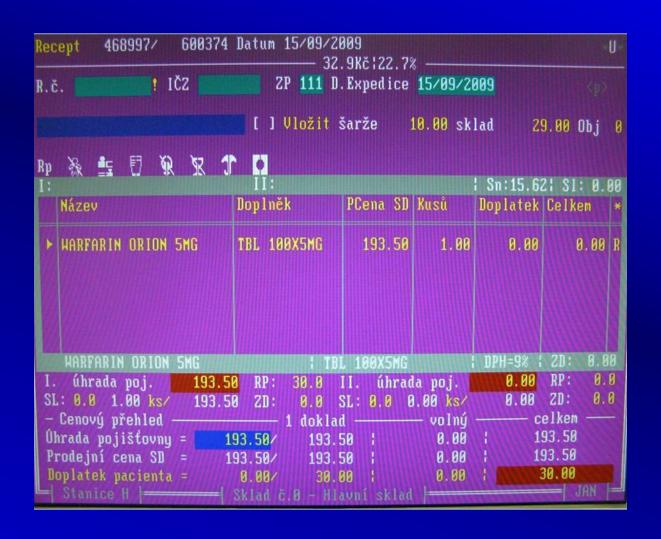
The picotgrams were publicized in Austria and former Eastern Germany

 Framm utilized a set of 13 Czechoslovak pictograms in his book Arzneimittelprofile für die Kitteltasche in 1998 (issued 4 times in Germany, Czech version in 2002, the book was published also in Poland and Hungary)

Conclusion

- In spite of all effort, the pictograms were almost not used in Czechoslovakia
- Several papers and diploma theses concerned pictograms were published in Czechoslovakia and abroad. This endeavour can be considered as an important step to intensify pharmaceutical consulting at Czechoslovak pharmacies in the 2nd half of 20th century
- The modified pictograms are still used in some Czech pharmacy information systems

An example of an information system using the pictograms:



Acknowledgment

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Thank you for your attention