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Prescription audit: experience in Garhwal (Uttaranchal), India

R K Rishi¹ Sharma Sangeeta²
K Surendra¹ M Tailang¹

¹Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, HNB Garhwal University Srinagar (GWL), Uttaranchal-246174; ²Technical Co-ordinator, India-WHO Essential Drugs Program, Delhi Society for Promotion of Rational Use of Drugs (DSPRUD), National Institute of Immunology, Aruna Asaf Ali Marg, New Delhi, India

Correspondence to: Professor R K Rishi, Pharmacology Department, Central Drugs Laboratory, Govern of India, 3 Kyd Street, Kolkata-700 016, India
E-mail: rkrishi@yahoo.com

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SUMMARY A total of 400 prescriptions were randomly audited from Govern Combined Hospital, Srinagar (Garhwal). Various prescribing specific indicators (recommended by World Health Organization and others) were studied and patient compliance was measured. All of the prescriptions were written for outpatients (males 59.25%; females 40.75%). The average number of drugs prescribed was 3.65 and about 51% of the drugs were prescribed by generic names. NSAIDs were the most widely prescribed (89.75%), antibiotics (77.25%), and vitamins (59.74%) in various clinical conditions. The diagnosis was mentioned only in 22.25% of the prescriptions. A total of 59% fixed dose combinations (FDCs) were prescribed. The patient compliance was 71.5%. The injection use was found to be 7% only. Our survey reveals increased drug exposure to the patients, indiscriminate use of NSAIDs, antibiotics and vitamins. Further studies in this area using a larger sample size should be carried out, and a well designed training programme should be conducted on rational drug use.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been great concern about the drug utilization pattern of many healthcare practices¹. There has been a tremendous increase in the number of pharmaceutical products available. Despite the acceptance of the essential drug concept by over 100 countries, current drug use patterns frequently result in unsafe use, waste of scarce resources, patient non-compliance, increased adverse drug reactions, and disease resistance². Drug use is affected by a complex web of knowledge, unbiased sources of information, aggressive drug promotion by the pharmaceutical industry, attitudes, practices and influences that go far beyond the usual bio-medical model and can vary widely between countries, professional groups and the general public. It is increasingly becoming important to document what drugs are prescribed, how many, for what reasons, and the cost involved, etc.¹. An essential tool in this respect is an objective, standard method of describing a pattern of drug-use and prescribing behaviour in health facilities by prescription audit^{3,4}. Quantitative and qualitative methods are available to study the pattern of drug use. To encourage drug-utilization studies, the World Health