

ROLE OF PHARMACIST IN THE RATIONAL USE OF DRUGS: AN OVERVIEW

***Tasneem Ara¹, Abdul Samieh Deva², Nitish Bhatia³**

¹Drug testing lab dalgate Srinagar, Kashmir

²Government Medical College Srinagar, Kashmir.

³Sri Sai College of Pharmacy Badhani Pathankot Punjab.

ABSTRACT:

The concept of rational use of drugs is an old concept. This concept has evolved as early as 300 B.C. The idea of Rational drug therapy has become a very important concept both at national as well as at international gatherings. The concept of rational use of drugs is very important because it will allow in prescribing the right drug, in appropriate dose for prescribed duration which is adequate to the clinical needs of the patient at the lowest cost which ultimately will lead to the safe, proper and effective use of drugs. It has been found that 50% of all medicines worldwide are prescribed, dispensed, or sold inappropriately and 50% of patients fail to take them correctly. So efforts are to be taken in order to have a rational use of drugs which in turn will avoid the ineffective and unsafe treatment, distress, prolongation of illness and increase in the cost of treatment. A pharmacist can play a multidisciplinary approach to the promotion of the rational use of medicines by providing proper information, and

instruction regarding the adverse drug reactions, dosage schedule of drugs to the patients and warning them about the unwanted effects of medicines and monitoring such unwanted effects. In collaboration with other health care professionals the pharmacist can play a key role in educating the patient about hazards of self medication, over use of drugs and polypharmacy. The pharmacist will play an important role in the management of drug procurement, storage and distribution that will ensure adequate use of medicines. In coordination with healthcare team, pharmacists can establish a common approach to the rational use of drugs by giving

Article Received on
29 March 2012,

Revised on 10 April 2012,
Accepted on 22 April 2012

***Correspondence for
Author:**

*** Tasneem Ara**

Drug testing lab dalgate
Srinagar Kashmir
India.

ara.tasneem@gmail.com

advice and information to patient regarding the proper use of drugs. Hence, proper role and involvement of a pharmacist in safe use of medicines and overall health care becomes very crucial. Pharmacist helps in achieving the goal of rational use of drugs by following good pharmacy practices. Thus we can conclude that promoting the rational use of medicines results in improved quality of life for the patient in particular and for the community in general.

Key words: WHO, rational drug use.

INTRODUCTION

Rational use of drugs is one of the old concept evolved as early as 300B.C. the irrational use of drugs is a serious phenomenon and needs to be taken a serious note. Irrational use of medicines is major problem world wide. WHO estimates that medicines are prescribed, dispensed or sold inappropriately and that half of all patients fail to take them correctly. It not only undermines the potential usefulness of medicines but also results in negative therapeutics and economic outcomes.

Rational use of medicines requires that “patient receive medications appropriate to their clinical needs in doses that meet their own individual requirements, for an adequate period of time and at the lowest cost to them and their community. In a broader way we can define rational use of drugs as, “prescribing right drug in adequate dose for the sufficient duration appropriate to the patients at lowest cost”.

HAZARDS OF IRRATIONAL USE OF DRUGS

As we know medicines are essentially foreign substances to human body and if not used with utmost care they can harm our normal physiological system. Hence, medicines need to be of good quality, safety, efficacy and besides this should be used rational. If the medicines are used in irrational mode they may pose wide spread health hazards like

- Unsafe treatment
- Prolongation of illness
- Distress and harm to patient
- Increase in the cost of treatment
- Increased morbidity and mortality
- Adverse drug reactions

- Blood borne diseases like HIV.
- Loss of patient confidence in health system

Thus if these essential commodities (medicines) are not used rationally they may stimulate the undesirable side effects which may result in above mentioned wide spread health hazards. On the other hand rational use of medication saves lives, makes sense and saves cents. It limits undesired toxicity and adverse events and maximizes on the benefits that can be derived from optimal use of medications. Patients are encouraged to always obtain advice from healthcare professionals to interpret symptoms of an illness and the appropriate remedy thus helping patients to adhere to treatment through effective and widely available enhancing flow of knowledge and information regarding rational use of drugs.

CAUSES OF IRRATIONAL USES OF DRUGS

There are various causes of irrational uses of drugs. some common casuese are mentioned below:

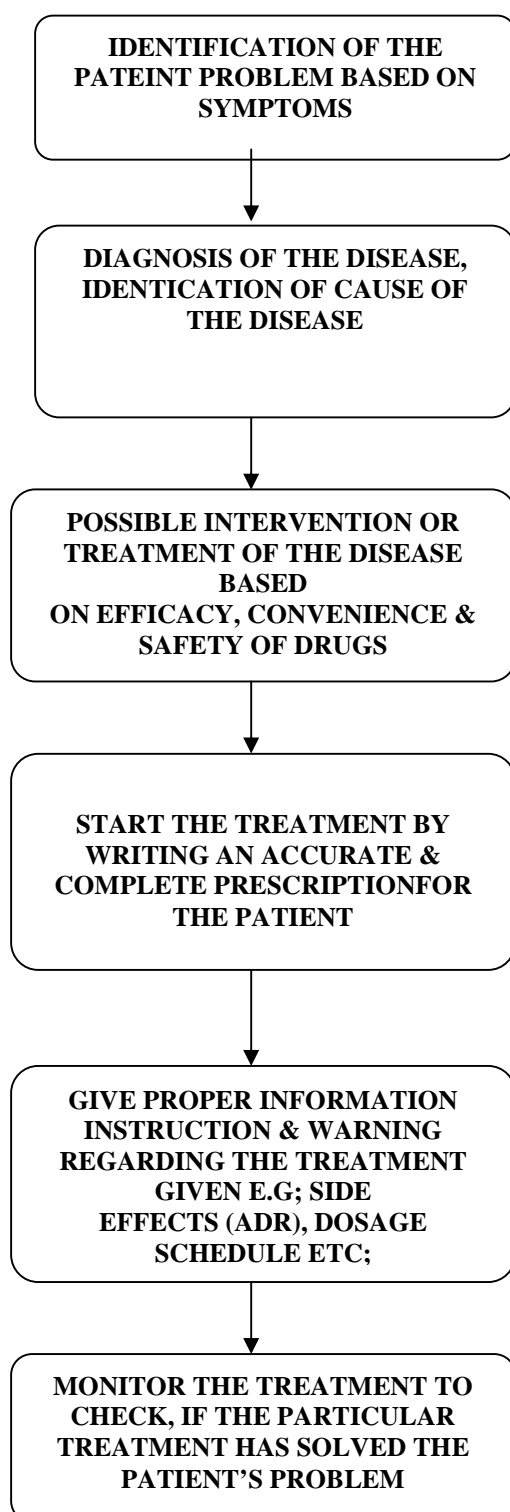
- ✓ Polypharmacy
- ✓ Inappropriate antibiotics
- ✓ Overuse of drugs /misuse/under use
- ✓ Failure to prescribe in accordance with clinical guidelines
- ✓ Self medication
- ✓ Non-adherence of dosing regimens
- ✓ Lack of information
- ✓ Faulty and inadequate training and education of medical graduates
- ✓ Poor communication between health professionals and patients

IMPROVEMENT OF RATIONAL DRUG OF DRUGS

Medicines (drugs) cannot be used rationally unless every one involved directly or indirectly in health care profession takes pains in objective information about the drug they prescribe and recommend the patient. The pre-requisites of rational drug use which include critical assessment & evaluation of benefits/ risk of drug used and comparing the advantages, disadvantages, safety & cost of the drug with existing drug for some indication. So in order to promote the rational drug use there must be availability of objective information & of continuing education & training in pharmacology, well organized drug regulatory authority &

supply of drugs, presence of large number of drugs in the market & the lucrative methods of promotion of drugs employed by pharmaceutical industries etc must be monitored. So in the health care profession physician and pharmacist can play a key role in promoting the rational use of drugs thus maintaining the actual decorum of this noble profession.

STEPS TO IMPROVE RATIONAL DRUG PRESCRIBING



RECOMMENDATIONS OF WHO FOR RATIONAL USE OF DRUGS

WHO recommends 12 key interventions in order to promote the rational use of drugs. These key points are as follows:

- Establishment of a multidisciplinary national body to coordinate policies on medicine use
- Use of clinical guidelines
- Development and use of national essential medicines list
- Establishment of drug and therapeutics committees in districts and hospitals
- Inclusion of problem-based pharmacotherapy training in undergraduate curricula
- Continuing in-service medical education as a licensure requirement
- Supervision, audit and feedback
- Use of independent information on medicines
- Public education about medicines
- Avoidance of perverse financial incentives
- Use of appropriate and enforced regulation
- Sufficient government expenditure to ensure availability of medicines and staff.

ROLE OF PHARMACIST IN PROMOTION OF RATIONAL USE OF DRUGS

Role of pharmacist has been emerging continuously so as to meet the modulating needs of society. The pharmacist is now no longer a supplier of medicines but a coordinator between different members of healthcare team and the patients. Hence, proper role and involvement of a pharmacist in safe use of medicines and overall healthcare becomes very crucial. Pharmacist can play a key role in promotion of rational use of drugs because they have a thorough knowledge of drugs. What amount is to be taken and for what reason a particular drug is used. Thus, giving patient the important information regarding the said. Pharmacist is involved in procurement, distribution, rational and informed use of drugs. Pharmacist helps in achieving the goal of rational use of drugs by following good pharmacy practices. By Promoting the rational use of medicines and patient medication counseling pharmacists play a key role in improved quality of life for the community.

The pharmacist being uniquely qualified because

- ✓ They are the custodians of much technical information on the medicinal products.

- ✓ They provide an interface between the duties of prescription and selling medicines and in doing so; they dispose of any perceived or potential conflict of interest between these two functions.
- ✓ Pharmacist has more opportunity to interact closely with the prescriber and therefore, to promote the rational prescribing and use of drugs.
- ✓ By having access to medicinal records the pharmacist is in a position to influence the selection of drugs, dosage regimens, to monitor patient compliance and therapeutics, response to drugs and to recognize and report adverse drug reactions.
- ✓ They are in a better position to educate other health professionals about the rational use of drugs.
- ✓ They can more easily participate in studies to determine the beneficial or adverse effects of drugs and further they are involved in analysis of drugs in body fluids.
- ✓ They can control hospital manufacture and procurement of drugs to ensure the supply of high quality products.
- ✓ They can actively take part in the planning and implementation of clinical trials.

Thus keeping in view above, the pharmacist can play a very important role in rectifying the problems in assuring the availability, affordability, quality and rational use of drugs. So a pharmacist can play a multidisciplinary approach to the promotion of the rational use of medicines by providing proper information, and instruction regarding the adverse drug reactions, dosage schedule of drugs to the patients and warning them about the unwanted effects of medicines and monitoring such unwanted effects. In collaboration with other health care professionals the pharmacist can play a key role in educating the patient about hazards of self medication, over use of drugs and polypharmacy. In coordination with healthcare team, pharmacists can establish a common approach to the rational use of drugs by giving advice and information to patient regarding the proper use of drugs. Hence, proper role and involvement of a pharmacist in safe use of medicines and overall health care becomes very crucial.

CONCLUSION

Rational use of drugs is an important tool in the safe and effective treatment of patients. Indiscriminate uses of drugs not only waste scarce resources that could otherwise be spent on other essential services, but also leads to drug induced disease. Rational use of medication saves lives, makes sense and saves cents. It limits undesired toxicity and adverse events and

maximizes on the benefits that can be derived from optimal use of medications. Patients are encouraged to always obtain advice from a healthcare provider to interpret symptoms of an illness and the appropriate remedy. One should avoid self-interpretation of symptoms, self-prescription of medication, and self-acquired remedies. It is equally important for one to view with caution advertisements that promote medications. Furthermore, it is just as bad for two people to share medications simply because they have the same symptoms or their situations are similar. A pharmacist can play a multidisciplinary approach to the promotion of the rational use of medicines by providing proper information, and instruction regarding the adverse drug reactions, dosage schedule of drugs to the patients and warning them about the unwanted effects of medicines and monitoring such unwanted effects. In collaboration with other health care professionals the pharmacist can play a key role in educating the patient about hazards of self medication, over use of drugs and polypharmacy. The pharmacist will play an important role in the management of drug procurement, storage and distribution that will ensure adequate use of medicines. In coordination with healthcare team, pharmacists can establish a common approach to the rational use of drugs by giving advice and information to patient regarding the proper use of drugs. Hence, proper role and involvement of a pharmacist in safe use of medicines and overall health care becomes very crucial. Pharmacist helps in achieving the goal of rational use of drugs by following good pharmacy practices. Thus we can conclude that promoting the rational use of medicines results in improved quality of life for the patient in particular and for the community in general.

REFERENCES

1. Health Administrator Vol: XIX Number 1: 5-7
2. Contact, A publication of the world council of churches, "promoting the rational use of medicines" No180, Oct-Dec 2006 Pg No: 2-3
3. World health organization mondiale de la sante, "The role of pharmacist in health care system" Part -1, New Delhi, India, 1988 Pg No 2,17,19,30
4. <http://www.whoindia.org/en/Index.htm>
5. <http://www.nejm.org>
6. <http://www.pharmainfo.net>