A CASE STUDY EVALUATING MALAYSIAN COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS' PRACTICES AND SERVICES

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OBJECTIVES: To evaluate the professional practices and services of the Malaysian community pharmacists, using a ‘simulated client’ interview method. The interview was carried at two community pharmacists in the state of Penang. METHODS: The simulated client (PhD student at the School of Pharmacy, Universiti Sains Malaysia) visited two community pharmacists ‘Pharmacy A’ and ‘Pharmacy B’ and asked for medications for his and his son’s ‘viral fever symptoms’ respectively. The details were documented in a form developed by the researchers. RESULTS: The findings suggested a poor professional behavior and dispensing practices among both the pharmacies studied. Although, both of them asked the duration of the symptoms, they did not ask the age of the patient(s), presence of blood in sputum, previous history of present illness, and asked the age of the patient(s), presence of blood in sputum, previous history of present illness, and nature of the sputum was asked only by the pharmacists at pharmacy B. The pharmacy A dispensed Tab. Clarithromycin 500 mg, Tab. Paracetamol 500 mg, and Amoxicillin clavulanic acid powder for suspension 125 mg + 31.25 mg/5 ml, Lincus Dextromethorphan + Pro-methacine + Pseudo-ephedrine + Paraben sebacia pengawet, and Tab. Green oats + Sea Buckthorn + Stinging Nettle + Tongat Ali + Danima. The cost of prescription was RM 56.50 (US$16.14) for pharmacy A and RM 129 (US$45.15) at pharmacy B. CONCLUSIONS: Our findings suggested the need for continuing pharmacy education (CPE) programs for the community pharmacists in the country and need for curriculum changes incorporating more topics related to community pharmacy practice. Through our survey included only two community pharmacies, it can serve as a pilot study for future in-depth survey encompassing various regions in Malaysia.

SENSORY SYSTEMS DISORDERS – Clinical Outcomes Studies

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EPIDEMIOLOGY AND COMORBIDITIES OF PATIENTS WITH PSORIASIS IN TAIWAN

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OBJECTIVES: Psoriasis is a chronic immune-mediated inflammatory disorder and is associated with other complex disorders. This study aims to describe the epidemiology of psoriasis and the prevalence of comorbidities in patients with psoriasis in Taiwan. METHODS: Patients who had at least one outpatient visit or admission diagnosis with ICD-9-CM code 696.0-1 in the Taiwan National Health Insurance (NHI) claims database during 2006 were identified as psoriasis cases. The cases were further classified into moderate to severe psoriasis (sPsO) for those who had previously received systemic therapy and mild psoriasis (mPsO) for those who had not. The cases were matched with controls in a 1:4 ratio by age, gender, and residential area. Matching variables included age, gender, residential area. Prevalence of comorbidities was assessed using prevalence relative risk (RR) based on a Cox proportional regression model. RESULTS: The prevalence of psoriasis in the overall population was 2.33% (n = 53,761). Mean age (SD) was 46.2 (± 18.6) and 60% were male. Of the 53,761 psoriasis cases, 17.2% (n = 9,265) were the index patient. sPsO patients had a significantly increased prevalence ratio (RR; 95% confidence interval) for hypertension (1.23; [1.21, 1.36]), diabetes (1.12; [1.10, 1.14]), depression (1.35; [1.33, 1.37]), heart disease (1.24; [1.22, 1.26]), and diabetes (1.12; [1.10, 1.14]). Increased risk of these comorbidities was also observed in mPsO patients compared to controls, but with a smaller magnitude compared to sPsO. CONCLUSIONS: Psoriasis was associated with a significantly increased risk of comorbidities, especially for those patients with moderate to severe disease. These health consequences should be taken into consideration when evaluating the burdens of psoriasis and designing effective treatment plans.