A CASE STUDY EVALUATING MALAYSIAN COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS’ PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND SERVICES

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, duration of the present illness, asked to refer the patient to a doctor, or referred the patient to a respiratory specialist. The simulated client was advised of the importance of the need for regular follow-up and blood tests. CONCLUSIONS: The findings suggest 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. Though our survey included only two community pharmacies, it can serve as a pilot study for future in depth survey encompassing various regions in Malaysia.

EPIDEMIOLOGY AND COMORBIDITIES OF PATIENTS WITH PSORIASIS IN TAIWAN

OBJECTIVES: Psoriasis is a chronic immune-mediated inflammatory disorder and is associated with a number of other complex disorders. This study aims to assess 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 diagnosed 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 from one million beneficiaries in the NHI dataset representing the Taiwan population. Matching variables included age, gender, and residential area. Prevalence of comorbidities was assessed using prevalence relative risk (RR) based upon 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 sPsO type. sPsO patients had a significantly increased prevalence ratio (RR; 95% confidence interval) for hypertension (1.33; [1.26, 1.40]), diabetes (1.52; [1.42, 1.63]), hyperglycemia (1.56; [1.44, 1.69]), heart disease (1.24; [1.14, 1.34]), depression (1.44; [1.23, 1.69]), hepatitis B (1.95; [1.44, 2.65]) and hepatitis C (2.19; [1.49, 3.22]). 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.