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Knowledge, attitude and practice of the pharmacists towards ophthalmic medications in Khartoum, Sudan

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Background: Ocular pharmacology is one of the least-managed areas of pharmaceutical care by pharmacists. However, pharmacists play a major role in health promotion towards eye care; they are in a position to advice patients upon the symptoms presented and demonstrate the proper use of ophthalmic drops and ointments. The challenge is to create a new generation of ocular pharmacists who can improve eye care treatment in managed care pharmacy.

Objective: This study aims to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of pharmacists towards ophthalmic medications.

Method: The study was conducted using 2 methods; the mystery shopper and conventional questionnaire methods, for getting the actual and perceived knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) respectively. The study was carried out on randomly selected pharmacies (n=100) in Khartoum. In collecting data of the actual pharmacist's (KAP), 4 scenarios were done by a mystery shopper. The observations were reported immediately after each visit using an observational checklist. In collecting the perceived data of the pharmacist's (KAP), a conventional questionnaire was designed and distributed to the same pharmacists. The actual and perceived data collected, was analyzed using SPSS.

Results: The results collected by the mystery shopper showed that overall performance- including knowledge, attitude and practice of the studied group of pharmacists was generally poor representing 47% of the total, 38% were average, and only 15% were good. However the questionnaire results were somehow better, as 43% were poor, 28% were average and 29% were good. Actual data collected by the mystery shopper showed that in scenario 1, none of the pharmacists recognized the inappropriate use of tropicamide eye drop in glaucomatous patients, and only 20% (n=5) could recognize that the best time for using travoprost eye drop is at evening. In scenario 2, only 20% (n=5) could recognize that acyclovir ophthalmic ointment should be used 5 times a day. Results of scenario 3, showed that the majority of the pharmacists 32% (n=8) provided tetracycline eye ointment for the treatment of acute bacterial conjunctivitis in infants, 36% (n=9) referred to an ophthalmologist. Scenario 4 showed that none of the pharmacists were aware of mast cell stabilizer and its indication as a prophylactic of allergic conjunctivitis. The perceived data collected by the questionnaire showed a better results as the pharmacists were trying to give an ideal answers knowing that they were a part of an assessment study.

Conclusion: Pharmacists were found to have poor knowledge, attitude and practice about ophthalmology and its medications. It is recommended to consider curriculum modifications to facilitate learning outcomes needed to practice pharmaceutical care especially in the ophthalmic area.

Biography

Cathrine Victor Gabra Boutros has completed her Master's degree in Clinical Pharmacy from University of Medical Sciences and Technology. She was appointed as a Lecturer of Pharmacology and Clinical Pharmacology at University of Medical Sciences and Technology from 2011 to 2015. Currently, she is a Lecturer of Pharmacology and Communication Skills at Nile College. She has published a paper about epidemiology of substance use among university students in Sudan in *Journal of Addiction*, January 2016.

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