

SURVEY OF PATIENTS ABOUT MEDICATIONS IN VIETNAM

Abstract

Improper use of medications is a major global public health concern for years. In order to gain better insight on how we can reduce improper medication use, a better understanding is needed of patient's current knowledge level about their medications as well as their expectation for medication guidance.

A prospective cross-sectional survey was conducted at one of the central hospitals in Vietnam for three consecutive days in October 2018. Using an originally developed questionnaire, we interviewed 153 outpatients about their knowledge of their own medications, the status of overuse or underuse of prescribed medications, and their expectation for medication guidance. The data were evaluated by descriptive statistics and chi-square test. Also, multivariate logistic regression analyses were applied to evaluate factors affecting patients' medication knowledge.

The mean age of patients was 62.7 (\pm 13.1) years; about half of them (46.0%) were male; and a majority of the educational background (45.1%) was below junior high school. More than one-third of the patients were prescribed six or more kinds of medications. Approximately 30% of patients routinely encountered a shortage or excess of prescribed medications. Multivariable analyses found that patients' knowledge level of their medication was significantly low for: males, low educational background, and farm, forest or fishery workers ($p < 0.05$), whereas other variables such as age, polypharmacy or comorbidities were not influential factors. About 65% of patients desired to have medication guidance, but even those who answered negatively to the need for guidance were not fully aware of important aspects of their own medications.

Patient-centered medication guidance is integral to promotion of proper use of medications. There is room for improvement of patients' understanding of medications through clinical pharmacists' intervention under the resource limited setting. Based on the results obtained, we should consider developing appropriate medication support tools for patients in an easy-to-understand manner, taking into account of the influential factors -male gender, education level, and

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job type. Specific intervention tools could guide not only patients but also health care professionals toward more proper use of medications and will improve clinical outcomes.