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The role of pharmacist towards achieving appropriate use of antibiotics: a qualitative study

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Background

The inappropriate use of antibiotics causes escalating emergence of resistant bacteria. The Pharmacist is a member of the health care team, last link before consumption of antibiotic by patients.

Methods

A qualitative study was carried out in 2015 with ten focus group discussions (FGDs) with pharmacists (N=43) and dispensers (N=12) in and four in-depth interviews with key informants from Colombo district representing state and private sector. In-depth interviews and FGDs were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data was analyzed thematically.

Results

Two major themes emerged from the data, (1) Pharmacists' behaviour concerning development of ABR and (2) Pharmacists' professional relationship in relation to rational use of antibiotics. All participants acknowledged that it's their responsibility to counsel the patient on taking antibiotics properly. Lack of time, understaffing, overcrowding with patients were recognized as major reasons affecting the quality of counselling. Many views with respect to the need for patient education, relationship with doctors, patient behavior, community awareness, training for community pharmacist

/dispensers to achieve better patient care. Job security and patient demands are the main reasons for dispensing antibiotics without a prescription.

Conclusion

This study highlights the issues faced by pharmacist /dispensers role in achieving appropriate use of antibiotics and there is an urgent need for improvement in their role.

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