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Assessment of antibiotic and other prescribing patterns at outpatient department of Sirimawo Bandaranayake specialized children hospital, Peradeniya: Sri Lanka using selected WHO prescribing indicators

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Background: Antibiotic resistance occurs when those are overused without a proper diagnosis and prescription.

Objective: The objectives of this study were to determine the average number of medications per encounter, and the pattern of antibiotics and other medications prescribed at outpatient department of Sirimawo Bandaranayake specialized children hospital, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted using systematic random sampling to select 375 paediatric patients between ages 1-5 years at the study setting. WHO prescribing indicators (Group I) used were, average number of medications per encounter, percentage encounter of prescribed injections, percentage encounter of prescribed antibiotics, percentage of medications prescribed with generic names, and percentage of medications prescribed in the essential drugs list or formulary. Age, gender, prescribed medication name, dose, route, frequency, and medication group according to WHO prescribing indicators were collected from prescription notes and prescription registration books, using a data extraction sheet. Data was analyzed in SPSS 25.0 using descriptive statistics.

Results: The majority were (52.8%) males. The majority (53.1%) of the prescriptions did not include any antibiotics. The average number of drugs per encounter was 2.97 and the maximum was six drugs. Percentage encounter of prescribed injections were zero, and 46.9% of the prescribed medications were antibiotics. Among all prescriptions (n=375), most of the medications (53.6%) were not included in the essential drug list. According to the prescribing pattern, 50.1% of medications were prescribed using the trade name.

Conclusion: Polypharmacy and prescribing antibiotics which were not included in the essential drug list was prominent among prescriptions of paediatric patients in the study setting. It is recommended to expand this study all island to identify prescription patterns and the average number of medications per encounter.