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Pharmacoepidemiology and pharmacotherapy: Basic concepts of pharmacovigilance

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Pharmacovigilance (PV) is defined by World Health Organization (WHO) as the science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other drug-related problem. WHO established its Program for International Drug Monitoring in response to the thalidomide disaster detected in 1961. Together with the WHO Collaborating Centre for International Drug Monitoring, Uppsala, WHO promotes PV at the country level. At the end of 2010, 134 countries were part of the WHO PV Program. The aims of PV are to enhance patient care and patient safety in relation to the use of medicines; and to support public health programs by providing reliable, balanced information for the effective assessment of the risk-benefit profile of medicines. In order to unify pharmacovigilance guidelines and performance across the Arab world, Arab Ministers of Health came to a common decree (number 7) in their 37th regular meeting in March 2012. Under the umbrella of the Arab League 'The Higher Technical Committee for Medicines' was established with representatives from all Arab countries, to create common Arab guidelines in pharmacovigilance, and in bioequivalence which were published in March 2014 and effective date is 1st July 2015.

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