

Pharmacovigilance: Challenges in India

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Pharmacovigilance: the word is derived from one Greek word 'Pharmakon' which means 'Drug' and one Latin word 'Viigilare' which means "To keep watch awake or alert". Pharmacovigilance becomes a very important discipline of clinical science now a days but still a long way to go to play an important role in health sector of India by overcoming the barriers, challenges and drawbacks. World Health Organization (WHO) defines Pharmacovigilance as Drug safety, is the pharmacological science relating to the collection, detection, assessment, monitoring, and prevention of adverse effects with pharmaceutical products [1].

The Specialized objectives of pharmacovigilance are Early detection of new adverse drug reactions, Detection of increases in known adverse drug reactions, Evaluation of risk factors for adverse drug reactions, Risk and benefit analysis, Dissemination of information. The goal of pharmacovigilance is very noble and includes primarily rational and safe use of drug products and secondarily educating and giving information regarding drugs to patients. In India pharmacovigilance programme is introduced in early twenty first century and now in expansion and optimization phase.

As per global data adverse drug reactions are the sixth leading cause of death and the incidence of serious adverse drug reactions in hospitalized patients is almost 7% [2]. This needs to address the different barriers along with challenges of pharmacovigilance and also requires necessary actions to be taken in order to deliver healthcare to the people of our motherland. The authors here tried to point out some challenges which pharmacovigilance programme is facing now a days and what should be the corrective measure for smooth running of this programme in current scenario.

Pharmacovigilance facing the challenges in healthcare delivery because of not getting priority. Biasness of drug in healthcare delivery system is also a big issue. Poor staffing, poor funding and mostly political pressures creating barrier in implementing of pharmacovigilance programme. Other challenges are associated with health professionals are few in number but many prescriber. Drug

safety not covered well in medical training. Health professionals are now a days too busy so motivation is too low. Lack of continuing medical education and difficulty in availability of drug information is another big issue. Some drug use problems contributing to the barriers in pharmacovigilance programme of India are availability of many types of drugs in households and dispensing the drugs by untrained persons. Some other drug use problems are wide spread use of injections, high levels of antibiotic use, inadequate treatment guidelines, poor prescribing and dispensing practices, counterfeit drugs and using of traditional medicines. Confounding illness is also a very big factor affecting in current scenario. Diseases like tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, malnutrition requires multiple drug therapy and adverse event occurs due to drug interactions and can lead to severe health hazard.

Due to the above reasons risk of adverse drug events are very high. So above challenges can be avoided by implementing proper rule and regulation of pharmacovigilance programme strictly everywhere. Drug safety study should be added in curriculum. Drug regulation regarding drug utilization pattern should be strengthened. Public campaigns for drug safety should be increased for improvement of awareness. In the market day by day no. of medicines are increasing and lack of professionals in health sector creating more challenges. Pharmacovigilance play a crucial role in meeting these challenges. Adverse events can be brought to a minimum level by having sound knowledge about the side effect of the drugs. Improvement of communication regarding pharmacovigilance between public and health professionals creates awareness and adverse occurring can be minimized. Proper knowledge on pharmacovigilance would help to health professionals to understand the effectiveness or risk of medicines that they prescribe and ensure a better healthcare to patient.

References:

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