

Drug and Poison Information Centers: An Emergent Need of Health Care Professionals in Pakistan

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Abstract : The drug information centers provide drug related information to the requesters that include physicians, pharmacist, nurses and other allied health care professionals. The International Pharmacist Federation (FIP) describes basic functions of a drug and poison information centers as drug evaluation, therapeutic counseling, pharmaceutical advice, research, pharmaco-vigilance and toxicology. Continuous advancement in the field of medicine has expanded the medical literature, which has increased demand of a drug and poison information center for the guidance, support and facilitation of physicians. The objective of the study is to determine the need of drug and poison information centers in public and private hospitals of Karachi, Pakistan. A cross sectional study was conducted during July 2013 to April 2014 using a self-administered, multi-itemed questionnaire. Non Probability Convenient sampling was used to select the study participants. A total of 307 physicians from public and private hospitals of Karachi participated in the study. The need for 24/7 Drug and poison information center was highlighted by 92 % of physicians and 67% physicians suggested opening a drug information center at the hospital. It was reported that 70% physicians take at least 15 minutes for searching the information about the drug while managing a case. Regarding the poisoning case management, 52% physicians complaint about the unavailability of medicines in hospitals; and mentioned the importance of medicines for safe and timely management of patients. Although 73% physicians attended continued medical education (CME) sessions, 92 % physicians insisted on the need of 24/7 Drug and poison information center. The scarcity of organized channel for obtaining the information about drug and poisons is one of the most crucial problems for healthcare workers in Pakistan. The drug and poison information center is an advisory body that assists health care professional and patients in provision of appropriate drug and hazardous substance information. Drug and poison information center is one of the integral needs for running an effective health care system. Provision of a 24 /7 drug information centers with specialized staff offer multiple benefits to the hospitals while reducing treatment delays, addressing awareness gaps of all stakeholders and ensuring provision of quality health care.

Keywords : drug and poison information centers, Pakistan, physicians, public and private hospitals

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