

Oral Presentations

OP 1: DISPENSING PRACTICE OF ORAL DOSAGE FORMS OF MEDICINES TO CHILDREN IN JAFFNA TEACHING HOSPITAL

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Introduction: Good dispensing practice is essential for rational use of medicines. Non-availability of suitable paediatric preparations also contributes to poor dispensing practice, including the manipulation of adult dosage forms with the accompanying risks of poor bioavailability and questionable palatability.

Objectives: This study describes the dispensing practice of oral dosage forms of medicines to children in Jaffna Teaching Hospital.

Methodology: This descriptive cross sectional study is part of an ongoing large scale study on rational use of oral dosage forms of medicines in children. Oral dosage forms of medicines dispensed to children under the age of 12 years in clinic and outpatient settings over a period of 4 months were reviewed by the researchers. Validated dispensing indicators, developed in the first phase of this study, were used. Data were extracted from the prescriptions and by observation using a structured pre-tested observation sheet. Descriptive statistical methods were used to analyse the data.

Results: Of the 426 medicines dispensed to 162 children, 400 [94%; 95 % CI: 91-96] were oral dosage forms. Liquids accounted for 58% [95 % CI: 52.7-62.6] of these oral dosage forms and did not need any manipulation. Solid dosage forms accounted for 42%. Of them, about one-third required manipulation prior to administration such as splitting and/or dissolving or crushing the adult tablet. The majority of these manipulations were seen with vitamin C and folic acid. None of the medicine packs or bottles had the relevant patient's name on the label with 18.5% [95 % CI: 14.8-22.6] having the medicine's name. Of the antibiotic suspensions (n=50), storage and administering instructions were provided only for 4% [95%; CI: 0.5 -14]. None received advice regarding side-effects.

Conclusion: Dispensing practice of oral dosage forms of medicines to children in Jaffna Teaching Hospital has much room for improvement. The necessity of medicines such as vitamin C needs to be reconsidered especially when suitable dosage forms are not available.