



A QUESTIONNAIRE BASED STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF DOCTORS WORKING IN A TERTIARY CARE TEACHING HOSPITAL TOWARDS THEIR PROLONGED STAY DUTIES IN HOSPITALS, ADR REPORTING TENDENCY, GENERIC DRUG PREFERENCES AND THEIR LIFESTYLE.

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ABSTRACT

Doctors need to do prolonged stay duties on their duty days. This study aimed to evaluate the opinion of Doctors regarding prolonged stay duties. Doctors need to report Adverse Drug Reactions to the ADR monitoring centres. There are recommendations worldwide to prescribe generic name of drugs. Researchers suggest regular physical exercises. So, this study aimed to analyse the Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR) experiences and attitude of doctors towards ADR reporting, their preference to generic/brand names and to assess life style of the doctors. So, a questionnaire based study was done among the doctors working in a teaching hospital. 64% of the doctors opined that the chances for diagnostic and treatment errors are more during prolonged stay duties. Only 1% of the doctors who witnessed Adverse Drug Reactions did ADR reporting. 57.48% of the doctors prefer only brand drugs. 54.79% of doctors are not doing any regular physical exercise.

KEY WORDS: Stay duties, ADR reporting, Generic drugs, Doctors.



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INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

In most teaching hospitals the resident doctors need to do prolonged stay duties on their duty days which may extend from one day's morning to next day's morning/noon or even up to next evening with just a few short breaks in between. So, there will be a need to work for more than 14 hours continuously which is termed as 'prolonged duty operations'. In such situations, there is possibility for errors to be made by the stay duty doctors in providing health care to the patients. Hospitals are places where the chances for making errors in treatments need to be nil. But sleeplessness and tiredness of the treating doctors due to working for prolonged duration may create a possibility for therapeutic errors by the stay duty doctors. Scientific evidence^(1,2) demonstrated that sleep deprivation adversely affects physician performance. For this reason, the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) enacted a requirement to limit duty hours for medical interns and residents.⁽³⁾ But in India there is no caution about it. Thus our objective was to assess the opinion of doctors working in a teaching hospital towards their prolonged stay duties which extends beyond 14 hours. Reporting of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) spontaneously by the health care professionals to the ADR monitoring centre is considered as the cornerstone of pharmacovigilance. Under-reporting of the ADRs by the prescribers is a common problem. This results in unnecessary exposure to the risk of ADRs.^(4,5) So, this study aimed at analyzing the ADR experiences of the doctors and their tendency to report them to the regional ADR monitoring centre. MCI urges doctors to promote use of generic drugs as these are more affordable than brand drugs. Prescribing drugs by generic names is an important aspect in rational prescribing.⁽⁶⁾ Doctors' choice of drugs in their self medications will be a good tool to assess their preference towards generic/brand drugs. Thus, this study aimed to analyse the self medication practices of physicians and their preference towards generic/brand drugs in self medication as well as for prescribing for patients. Healthy life styles like regular physical exercises prevent

many chronic non communicable diseases like Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Ischemic heart diseases, etc.⁽⁷⁾ Doctors are more likely to counsel on healthy life style patterns for their patients and among the general public. It has been demonstrated that physicians who themselves have healthy habits are more likely to promote such habits among their patients.⁽⁸⁾ So, we aimed to assess the life style of doctors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

With all these aims we did a questionnaire based cross sectional study among doctors working in Vinayaka Mission's Medical College and Hospital, Karaikal which is a tertiary care teaching hospital and the study was done during the month of July 2013. A questionnaire was prepared containing various questions which will evaluate the demographic data of the doctors, their daily working hours, daily entertainments, sleeping hours per day, physical exercises, medication patterns, preference towards generic/ brand drugs, their ADR experiences, ADR reporting tendency and their opinion regarding prolonged stay duties in hospitals. The study participants were given a short introduction regarding the study. The questionnaire was issued to 240 doctors including the Post Graduates and Interns working in the hospital. Only those professionals who were willing to fill the questionnaire voluntarily after being explained about the study were included in the study. Approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee was obtained before starting the questionnaire survey and confidentiality was ensured.

RESULTS

200 doctors filled the questionnaire giving a response of 83% .Out of the 200 participants, 60 were teaching staff of various departments, 75 were interns and 65 were Post Graduate students.

Table 1
Attitude and Perception of doctors towards prolonged stay duties

Question	Doctors' answer	Number of doctors (%)
Prolonged stay duties are comfortable to doctors?	Yes	97 (48.5%)
	No	103 (51.5%)
Will stay duties beyond 14 hours increase the diagnosis and treatment errors by doctors?	Yes	128 (64%)
	No	72(36%)

51.5% of the doctors opined that prolonged stay duties are uncomfortable for them and interestingly 64% (n =72) of the doctors suggested that the chances for diagnosis and treatment errors are more during prolonged stay duties which is not acceptable in patient management, as it may result in iatrogenic illnesses to the patients.

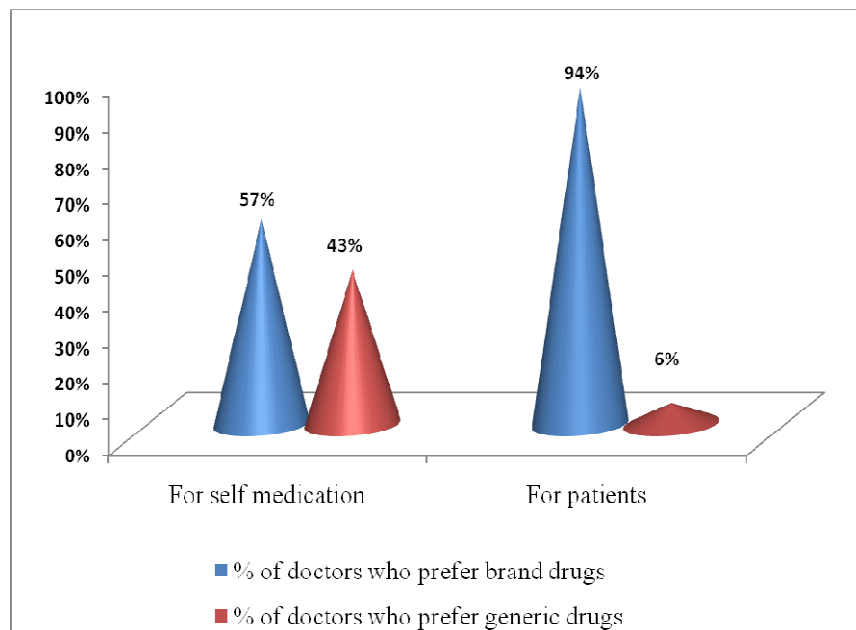
ADR experiences and attitude towards ADR reporting

43% (86) of the doctors who participated in the study did witness at least one patient presenting to them with Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) in their experience. This includes the ADR which might have been due

to the drugs advised by the doctors involved in the study or patients who were been medicated by other doctors and presented to the study doctors with ADRs. 13% of all those ADRs were considered serious by the doctors who managed them. NSAIDs, Penicilins, Cephalosporins, parenteral iron preparations and Fluroquinolones were the drugs to which the ADRs were encountered more commonly by majority of them. Only 2 out of the 86 doctors reported the ADRs to the monitoring centre. This shows that the tendencies towards reporting of the ADRs to the ADR monitoring centers are very less among the health care providers.

Preference towards generic/ brand drugs for self medication and for prescribing to the patients

Figure 1
preference of doctors towards generic/ brand drugs.

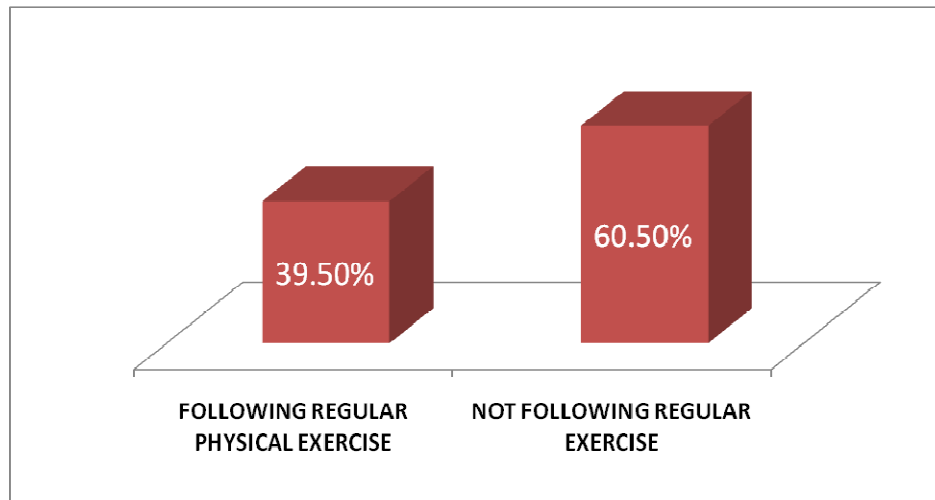


The fig 2 depicts that 57% (114) of the doctors prefer only brand drugs for self medicating and 94% (188) of them prefer prescribing brand drugs for their patients. Thus there is a general predilection among doctors towards brand drugs in self medicating and the predilection is more in prescribing drugs to the patients.

Life style of Doctors

70% (140) of the doctors say that they do hospital works not more than eight hours a day. But, 19.5% (39) work more than twelve hours a day.

Figure 2
Percentage of doctors doing regular physical exercises



Only 39.5% (79) of doctors are doing regular physical exercises. This shows that majority (60.5%) of the doctors are not doing any regular exercises which is not healthy. Among those doctors who follow regular physical exercises, majority of them (54.45%) prefer walking followed by running (17.72%), jogging (13.92%) and swimming (3.5%) and spend twenty to thirty minutes a day for these activities. 7% (14) of the entire participants spare no time for entertainments. 70.5% of the doctors sleep for 6 to 8 hours a day which is good. 10% (20) of the doctors are on regular treatment for their illnesses. 67.5% (135) of the doctors involved in the study take regular nutritional supplements. Thus, all these data indicate that many doctors are not following a healthy life style with lack of physical activities.

DISCUSSION

Majority of the doctors are of the opinion that there are more chances of treatment errors during prolonged stay duties beyond 14 hours and hence the stay duties can be converted

into shift duties so as to avoid treatment errors and to prevent iatrogenic diseases in patients. The socio-economic and health consequences of ADRs have been highlighted in several studies.^(9 -11) Attitude towards reporting of ADRs is much lesser among the participants in our study. A few studies carried out in India and Nepal have also shown poor knowledge, attitude, and deficient practices of ADR reporting among the prescribers and healthcare professionals.^(12 -14) This necessitates motivation through various programs among the health care professionals to report the ADRs promptly. Generic drug preference is less among doctors. Some other similar study findings also have reported that the preference to generic drugs is less among doctors in India and also in Bangladesh.^{15,16} This needs proper encouragement among doctors to prescribe generic drugs in these developing countries wherein majority of the people are in the poor socio economic strata. Many participants in our study were lacking regular physical exercises which convey that preventive care is less among those doctors

and this needs great caution among them as this may lead to many chronic morbidities.

CONCLUSION

Thus we conclude that the stay duty hours need to be limited for the benefit of the patients. Additionally, this study reveals that there is a need for creating intensive awareness among doctors regarding reporting of ADRs, preventive and self care and also towards the usage of generic drugs. Doctors being the accepted health advisors among the patients, they should be aware and follow what they need to advice to their patients. We

need further clinical subjective studies to confirm the findings of our study as this is only a questionnaire based objective study.

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