

Drug Therapy Management

Editorial

The purpose of drugs is to improve clinical outcomes and the patient's quality of life. However, evidence suggests that whenever drugs are given, a serious problem of drug-related morbidity and mortality exists which not only defeats the purpose of drug therapy but also entails considerable cost. It is predicted, that in future health care will rely even more heavily on drug therapy to improve patient outcomes, creating an increased risk of drug-related morbidity.

While we recognise the fact that drug misadventure will always occur, our aim as healthcare professionals should be to eliminate drug misadventure altogether. The one and only true focus of any healthcare professional is the patient's well being, and with that in mind it is unacceptable for us to allow the occurrence of drug-related morbidity and mortality especially when in many cases they could be prevented.

Today we form part of a society with increased expectations from health care; a society that expects accountability. This society primarily demands safe, appropriate and

effective drug therapy. We are duty bound to make every effort possible to meet such demands. Undeniably, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary to deliver the best possible care to the patient. The constructive way forward is to identify the source of the problem and construct a plan to eliminate the likelihood of its future occurrence. A concerted effort to reduce drug-related problems would improve patient outcomes, enhance patient and professional satisfaction and decrease overall healthcare costs.

An interesting model currently practiced in the United States is

collaborative drug therapy management (CDTM). CDTM requires a professional partnership between pharmacist and doctor whereby a pharmacist, within terms of professional agreement, may engage in activities which include initiating, modifying and monitoring drug therapy; ordering and performing laboratory tests, assessing patients' response to therapy; educating and counseling patients and administering medications. It has been found to be the most efficient and effective way to provide pharmaceutical care, as the pharmacist has a direct impact on patient care and clinical outcomes. It is also essential for CDTM to provide cost-effective drug therapy management.

Such a model should indeed be aspired to. ★

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