

Pharmacovigilance - Shaping the Present and Future of Medicines

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Editorial

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Editorial

Pharmacovigilance has an important role in detecting adverse drug reactions. The success of the programme depends on the knowledge and attitude of the involved professionals. Strong Pharmacovigilance programme will help the world in detecting ADR quickly and adequately.

With the advent of the 21st century there has been a plethora of drugs hitting the markets. Along with the benefits comes the risk of unavoidable adverse drug reactions (ADRs). Drugs reactions contribute to 5-10% of all hospital admissions. To keep a watch out for the same the concept of Pharmacovigilance came to being. The word Pharmacovigilance is derived from the word *Vigilare* which means to watch; alert watchfulness. Pharmacovigilance helps us in detecting unexpected adverse reactions at an early phase by monitoring the effects in the whole population exposed to the particular drug.

The major aims are:

1. Early detection of unknown ADRs
2. To identify risk factors
3. To detect any increase in frequency of a particular adverse effect.
4. The final goal is to improve patient care and safety

Most of the countries in the world today have their own mechanism to report and identify ADRs. All the databases ultimately are channelled to Upsalla Monitoring Centre, Sweden where signal processing is carried out.

Any health care professional like doctors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists can report ADRs. Even patients themselves can report ADRs in some countries via portals like toll free telephone numbers or websites. But then why are still the Pharmacovigilance programmes across the world still in the infant stage? Many factors and taboos act as deterrent when it comes to reporting.

1. Lack of proper knowledge regarding ADRs, ways to report an ADR.
2. Fear of prosecution on the part of the doctor if he/she admits that an adverse event has occurred due to the drugs prescribed by him/her.
3. Lack of time in busy schedule of the clinicians.
4. No mechanism for reporting even if ADRs are detected.

Hence it becomes an uphill task for the Pharmacovigilance programmes to become successful. What can be done in such scenario?

1. Teaching Pharmacovigilance to the medical professionals.
2. Impart training to residents, faculty, nurses and pharmacists on the importance of Pharmacovigilance and how to report it.
3. Sensitizing clinicians regarding the important role that they play in the success of the programme.
4. Organizing conferences, workshops on Pharmacovigilance. All health care professionals should be encouraged to submit case reports on ADRs.

5. And lastly but most importantly the government should be serious on strict and adequate implementation of the Pharmacovigilance programmes.

Pharmacovigilance is the way ahead. More and more awareness and reporting will certainly help and go a long way in aiding the professionals in understanding ADR patterns and even forecasting it.