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Awareness and Experience about Government Pharmaceutical Pricing Regulations on Medication Usage of Patients with Chronic Non-communicable Diseases

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Background: Different number of brand names are promoted for one generic medication with a wide price variation in Sri Lanka. Different countries apply varied pricing policies to ensure price control of medicines. The extraordinary Gazettes were established by Sri Lankan government to regulate the price of medicines in 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 which affected on price of selected medicines in Sri Lanka.

Objectives: To assess awareness and experience about government pharmaceutical pricing regulations on medication usage of patients with chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Methods: The study was a prospective cross-sectional study conducted from November 2019 to February 2020. Data was obtained from 400 patients with chronic NCDs using an interviewer administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was content and face validated using 20 patients. The awareness and experience about government pharmaceutical pricing regulations on medication usage of patients with chronic non-communicable diseases were assessed from patients who attended two pharmacies in Peradeniya and Kandy using convenience sampling method.

Results: Among the 400 patients, 56% were females and median age was 64 years. The most commonly observed NCD was hypertension (56.75%). Of the total sample, 53% were aware about price regulations. Out of the patients who were aware about new pharmaceutical revised pricing policy, 67% of patients were aware about medication price changes as well. Moreover, 86% of patients experienced price increment, 8% experienced a reduction and 6% experienced no change. Substituted medicines were used by patients due to the perception on effectiveness (37.88%), price (18.18%) and unavailability (0.76%). Among the patients who were aware about price regulations, 27% of patients mentioned that it is extremely favorable to Sri Lanka.

Conclusions: Majority of the patients in the selected sample were aware of price regulations of medicines and patient's satisfaction was less regarding regulations.

Keywords: Extraordinary Gazette, Generic, Non-communicable diseases, Pharmaceutical pricing regulation