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TITLE

Quality Use of Generic Medicines in Malaysia: A Way Forward

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The provision of healthcare has traditionally been managed based on the philosophy that, where the patient is concerned, price should not be a hindrance. However, with the global escalating healthcare cost, governments in many countries have adopted ongoing series of cost containment attempts in an effort to spend their limited financial resources efficiently so that equitable access to healthcare can be provided. One of the many ways to control healthcare expenditure is to promote the use of cheaper generic drugs instead of the more expensive branded equivalents and this strategy had been adopted by health authorities in many countries around the globe, including Malaysia. The availability of cheaper generic medicines in the Malaysian market gives an opportunity for both the government and consumers alike to reduce the cost associated with the use of pharmaceutical products. However, the use of generic medicines is often seen as a contentious issue among majority of Malaysian prescribers. This are mainly due to the debate which centred on issues related to bioequivalence, quality and safety of generic medicines available in the country. As the Malaysian government through its National Medicine Policy has mandated the use of generics in both public and private sectors, it is imperative that misconceptions held towards generics among current medical practitioners need to be addressed scientifically using sound educational input.