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Analgesics and antipyretics for the management of fever and pain in children, according to parents' experiences

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Background: Fever in children is the most common symptoms managed by health care professionals. Fever concerns the parents to an extent that even a minimal rise in temperature prompts them to administer antipyretics to their children that if not used optimally can lead to adverse drug reactions (ADRs).

Aims: To determine whether in retrospect, parents had witnessed any ADRs related to use of antipyretics and analgesics in their children and to assess parents' experiences toward antipyretics and analgesics use.

Method: A cross-sectional survey was conducted in four specialized and tertiary hospitals in Jeddah city, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire was issued to all the parents who had signed the consent and agreed to take part in the study anonymously.

Results: 661 parents provided information on the occurrence of ADRs in their children, 31.5% of children had experienced ADRs, loss of appetite (23%) and stomach ache (20.3%) were the most commonly reported symptoms, from all ADRs reported. 71.8% parents described them as slight, however 18% agreed that these symptoms were annoying, 6.7% of children had experienced significant symptoms, 16.6% had stopped taking the medication and 26.3% went to the hospital. 40% of parents believed that the medication used has caused these adverse symptoms and in their opinion Paracetamol (Acetaminophen) was responsible for these ADRs, 26.5% of parents obtained these medications without prescription, 14% consulted family and friends before using the medications.

Conclusion: One-third of parents believe that analgesics and antipyretics caused ADRs in their children, although the majority of ADRs were mild, however a significant number of harmful ADRs were occurred. This study adds further weight to the call for increase awareness of parents for safe and optimal use of antipyretics and analgesics in children.

Biography

Mansour Tobaiqy is an Assistant Professor of Clinical Pharmacology in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jeddah, KSA. He is also the General Supervisor of the Human Resources Development Centre in the same university and he has completed his PhD in Medicine and Therapeutics from the School of Medicine, University of Aberdeen, UK. He is also a Visiting Professor at RGU, UK. He has done several researches on the safety medicines in children and pharmacovigilance in general.

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