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The Royal Melbourne Hospital, Australia

The role of clinical trials pharmacist in study medication adherence

The adherence of participants on study medication is critical to the accurate interpretation of study results. As patient education and counselling are important responsibilities for pharmacists in all practice settings, clinical trials pharmacists should also be actively involved in counselling the participants on study medications. The effects of clinical trials pharmacist counselling on medication adherence were previously studied and the results were presented at the Pharmacovigilance conference in 2012 (99% in participants with counselling from pharmacists vs. 89% in participants without ($p>0.05$)). A replication study was conducted in 2015 and the adherence rate for participants who received counselling from pharmacists was 98% compared to 76% for participants who did not. This assures the positive effects of counselling by clinical trials pharmacist on participant adherence in clinical trials medication. It was also noted that the participant adherence declined as the dosing frequency was increased. The decrease was more significant (81% to 67%) when the participants had not been counselled by the pharmacist ($p<0.05$). For those participants who received counselling by the pharmacist, the decrease (98% to 97%) was not significant ($p>0.1$). The results signify the importance of participant counselling by pharmacist when the treatment regimen are more complicated. In the clinical trial setting where the measurement of medication adherence is essential for interpretation of the results, counselling by the pharmacist could contribute to more accurate outcomes. Often the role of pharmacist in clinical research is somewhat limited to drug management, but it should be recognized that the clinical trials pharmacist has an in-depth knowledge of pharmacotherapy and study protocol and is capable of providing comprehensive clinical services for study participants.

Biography

Eugenia Hong is a senior Pharmacist in charge of Clinical Trials Pharmacy at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, Melbourne Health, Australia. She leads clinical trials pharmacy which provides a wide-range of clinical research services for over 300 studies conducted in Melbourne Health. She is a Committee Member of Specialty Practice (COSP) in Investigational Drugs in The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia and published the Standards of Practice for Pharmacy Investigational Drugs Services in Australia and Clinical Trials Starter Kit as a member of COSP.

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