



## National Drug Information Center Program at Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia

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My story had been stated since 1992 when I graduated as pharmacist from college of pharmacy King Saud University, the 1<sup>st</sup> school of pharmacy in Saudi Arabia [1,2]. I worked in the biggest and public 500-bed hospital in Ministry of Health (MOH) at that time. I worked with my director of pharmacy Dr. Mohaamed Alhaidari, he was the 1<sup>st</sup> clinical pharmacist at MOH, and he had master degree of clinical pharmacy from school of pharmacy university of Pacific in California United States of America, and 1<sup>st</sup> board certified of pharmacotherapy specialist in Saudi Arabia, currently he is director of General Drug Registration at The Executive Board of Health Ministers Council for the Cooperation Council States, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia [3]. Our director of pharmaceutical care assigned me to work in drug information and poisoning center, I was trained at this center which established in 1989 with main job of answering drug information inquiries from all health care professional in local hospital; that's including physician, pharmacist and nurses, and we do not have public services during that period. We used manual documentation of answering drug information inquiries. The center shared in revision for new medications addition to local hospital formulary and MOH formulary, the center was member in local Pharmacy and Therapeutic committee (PTC) and corporate PTC at MOH. We had small library with tertiary references as text book like Martindale, Remington, Koda-Kimble applied therapeutics, secondary reference like Micromedex DrugDex and PoisonDex in microfiche old version, and primary references of some journals for instant; American Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, Drug Inequivalent and Clinical Pharmacy (DICP) the old name of annals of Pharmacotherapy. We published pharmacy newsletter quarterly and distributed to all over MOH hospitals. In 1998 I had Master degree of clinical pharmacy from school of pharmacy King Saud University; I was assigned as director of pharmaceutical care of our hospital. I expanded the Drug information and poisoning services with updating of practice guidelines; we updated the above references, new CD version of Micromedex, subscribed with Drug Information System (DIS) database from IOWA University and published two conference papers about our activities at Saudi Pharmaceutical Society conference in Riyadh [4,5].

In 2008, the center converted to Regional drug information and poisoning center, and covered all Riyadh region with almost 40 hospitals and help them to establish drug information center at each hospital, we had started training program for pharmacists and internship Pharm D student in drug information rotation, and very much expanded of services including but not limited to medication safety program, anti-coagulation program, pain management program, the 1<sup>st</sup> PharmacoEconomic program at MOH, and shared publication at international American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) conference [6]. In 2012, his Excellency Minister of Health Dr. Abdullah Alraheeha assigned me as General Director of General Administration of Pharmaceutical Care (GAPC-MOH), then in 2013 the national drug information center was born to cover more 250 hospital pharmacies, and more than 2500 Primary care centers pharmacies as part of strategic planning of GAPC-MOH [7], we established central committee of network drug information including members from each region, we applied all the previous services with very large scale, the

center applied American Society of Health System Pharmacist drug information practice guidelines with updating regularly [8], national drug information training programs had been started as part of national pharmacy practice programs [9], expanded all activities related of cooperate PTC at MOH on addition and deletion medication from MOH formulary, shared in MOH emergency hotline 937 with more than 40 clinical and trained pharmacists provide services to health care professional and public, applying an electronic documentation of drug information inquiries [10], and participated on international conferences of *International Society for PharmacoEconomics and Outcomes Research (ISPOR)*. Those services expanded tremendously in all over Saudi Arabia.

We wish to explore all national drug information center related activities, and write several topics in the coming issues but not limited to the following

1. Minimum Standard of Drug Information Services
2. Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committees at MOH and Privates hospitals
3. Self assessment of Drug information services at MOH and Privates hospitals
4. Analysis of Drug Information inquiries at Privates Hospitals
5. Cost avoidance of Drug Information centers at Privates Hospitals
6. Drug information resources at MOH and Privates hospitals Pharmacies
7. Drug information resources at Primary Care Centers Pharmacies
8. Drug information resources at Community Pharmacies
9. TQM Drug information Services at MOH and Privates hospitals
10. Health Care Provider perception of Drug Information Services at MOH hospitals
11. Health Care Provider perception of Drug Information Services at Privates hospitals
12. Patient Perception of Drug Information Services at Hotline 937 call center

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13. Cost avoidance of Drug Information Services at Hotline 937 call center
  14. Drug Information Services in Specialized Centers (Cardiology, Diabetes, Nephrology, Dental, Pediatrics, Oncology)
  15. Ethical issues at Drug Information Centers of MOH and Privates hospitals
  16. Directory of Pharmacist operated Drug Information Centers in Saudi Arabia
  17. Past and Present MOH formulary
  18. Workload Analysis of Drug Information Center at MOH Hospitals
  19. Medication Safety of New Drug added to MOH formulary
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National drug information center is very important part of administration from GAPC-MOH, and very potential program to health care provider and public. It is considerable demand to improve patient outcome and avoid un-necessary health care cost.

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