Challenges of Implementing Pharmacovigilance

Presented at Pharmacovigilance Workshop, Lusaka, Zambia

Author: Oscar O Simooya
Copperbelt University, Zambia
Challenges

- Health care delivery
- Health professionals
- Drug use problems
- Confounding illnesses
Pharmacovigilance

Definition

The science of collecting, monitoring, researching, assessing and evaluation of information of the adverse effects of medicinal products
Pharmacovigilance

Aims
- Early detection of new ADRs
- Detection of increases in known ADRs
- Risk factors for ADRs
- Benefit/risk analysis
- Dissemination of information
Pharmacovigilance

Goals

- Rational and safe drug use
- Educating and informing patients
Health care delivery

- Pharmacovigilance a recent priority
- Health care delivery drug biased
- Political pressure – ARVs
- Poor staffing, Zambia <1000 doctors for 11million people and < 100 pharmacists
- Poor funding to health sector
Health professionals

- Few in number but many prescribers
- Drug safety not covered well in medical training
- Low motivation, too busy
  - Lack of continuing medical education
  - Drug information not readily available
Drug use problems

Information on drug use not readily available but Ministry of Health, Zambia, 1996 – widespread irrational drug use, including

- Availability of many types of drugs in households
- Dispensing by untrained persons
Drug use problems

- Widespread use of injections
- High levels of antibiotic use
- Inadequate treatment guidelines
- Poor prescribing and dispensing practices
- Counterfeit drugs
- Traditional medicines
Confounding illnesses

- HIV/AIDS
- Tuberculosis
- Malnutrition
Therefore,

The risk of adverse drug events very high
Options

- Need to lobby for pharmacovigilance
- Include drug safety in curriculum
- Strengthen drug regulation
- Increased public campaigns for drug safety
- Promote regional & international networks
Conclusion

1. All drugs are potentially harmful, therefore rationale drug use is a component of good medical practice

2. Therefore, drug safety monitory is the responsibility of all – government, health professionals and consumers/patients