

Pharmacovigilance and non-medical prescribers: exploring perceptions of training, contribution and potential for enhancement

Derek Stewart, Katie MacLure, Vibhu Paudyal

Carmel Hughes

Molly Courtenay

James McLay



INTRODUCTION

The UK based process for spontaneous reporting of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs), known as the 'Yellow Card Scheme' (YCS), encourages reports to be submitted by healthcare professionals, patients and the general public¹. However, poor reporting rates are a long-standing limitation affecting the YCS². The introduction of supplementary and independent prescribing rights³ for pharmacists, nurses and other healthcare professionals has the potential to enhance participation in the regulatory pharmacovigilance processes. The aim of this research was to determine nurse and pharmacist prescribers' perceptions of their training, contribution and potential for enhancement of their pharmacovigilance role.

METHOD

A web-based survey instrument was developed, tested for face and content validity by an expert panel, and piloted. It comprised 5 sections on: **prescriber demographics**; **pharmacovigilance training**; **experience of Yellow Card reporting**; **attitudes toward ADR reporting**; **comments and suggestions to encourage Yellow Card reporting**. Nurse prescribers were sampled through the Association of Nurse Prescribers (n=912). Pharmacist prescribers (n=2439) were targeted through: national continuing education organisations; national Pharmacy Boards; local practice forums and the National Prescribing Centre. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 17.0 with a thematic approach used to analyse responses to open questions.

RESULTS

Response rate:
293 nurses (32.2%)
320 pharmacists (13.1%)

Female (81.9%)
over 20 years
healthcare
experience
(57.6%)

Positive attitude
towards YCS ✓

Awareness of YCS ✓

Correctly answered
seven questions on YCS
(22.8%) ✓

Q. Are you concerned
about patient
confidentiality in YC
reporting?

R. Agree or strongly
agree (14.7%)

Q. Are you concerned
about legal
implications of ADRs
from your prescribing?

R. Agree or strongly
agree (35.1%)

Q. Do you feel
competent in all
aspects of
pharmacovigilance?

R. Unsure or
do NOT agree (29.6%)

Q. Did pharmacovigilance
feature in your
prescribing training?

R. Can't remember (35.6%)
Yes (57.2%)*

Nurses indicated greater
recall (p<0.002)

Q. Do you need more
pharmacovigilance
training?

R. Agree or strongly
agree (34.2%)

Reported ADRs:

Can't remember (25.9%)

Skin related (9.5%)

GI bleed (3.3%)

Death (0.8%)

Never submitted a
Yellow Card (42.4%)

Pharmacists more likely to
have submitted (p<0.002)
Those in community
setting less likely to have
submitted (p<0.002)

57.2% rated the
course level of
difficulty and
duration as
appropriate

Q*. Was it relevant
to your practice?

R. Neutral or
irrelevant (34.8%)

Q*. How would you
rate the emphasis on
legal implications?

R. Neutral or
inappropriate (46.7%)

Q. How can YC
reporting be
enhanced?

R. More publicity
and education

DISCUSSION

Respondents felt competent and aware of their pharmacovigilance role with further training needs indicated. Findings may not be generalisable due to the low response rate; no information is available on non-respondents. Increased publicity and education are identified as key measures for enhancing non-medical prescribers, other healthcare professionals and patients Yellow Card reporting.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The research team wish to acknowledge and thank the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) for funding the study, respondents for taking part and the following for their assistance: Association of Nurse Prescribers (ANP), Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS), Northern Ireland Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD), NHS Education for Scotland (NES), Centre for Pharmacy Postgraduate Education (CPPE) and the National Prescribing Centre (NPC).

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