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Perceptions and practices of community pharmacists towards antimicrobial stewardship

Sameer Dhingra

The University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago

The objective of this study was to assess the perception and self-reported practices of community pharmacists towards antimicrobial stewardship. A cross-sectional study was conducted among community pharmacists between March-April, 2015, using a self-administered, pre-tested questionnaire in the State of Selangor, Malaysia. A simple random sampling approach was used to select pharmacy sites. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used to analyse the data. A total of 188 pharmacists responded to the survey, giving a response rate of 83.5%. The majority of participants (n=182, 96.8%) believed that antimicrobial stewardship program helps healthcare professionals to improve the quality of patient care. However, more than half of pharmacists were neutral in their opinion about the incorporation of antimicrobial stewardship programs in community pharmacies (n=102, 54.2%). Though

collaboration was often done by pharmacists with other health professionals over the use of antibiotics (n=104, 55.3%), a significant proportion of participants (n=102, 54.2%) rarely/occasionally participate in antimicrobial awareness campaigns. Pharmacists having postgraduate qualification were more likely to held positive perceptions of, and were engaged in, antimicrobial stewardship than their non-postgraduate counterpart ($p<0.05$). Similarly, more experienced pharmacists (>10 years) held positive perceptions towards antimicrobial stewardship ($p<0.05$). The study highlighted some gaps in the perception and practices of community pharmacist towards antimicrobial stewardship. Development of customized interventions would be critical to bridging these gaps and improve their perception and practices towards antimicrobial stewardship.

e: Sameer.Dhingra@sta.uwi.edu