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How informed are our patients about generic medicines? – A study from coastal South India

Darshan BB

Kasturba Medical College, Mangalore, darshan.bb@manipal.edu

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How informed are our patients about generic medicines? – A study from coastal South India

Background: Medicines form a major part of Out of Pocket Expenditure (OOPE) for patients. The government has introduced schemes to distribute generic medicines at low cost in order to reduce the financial burden on patients. This study was undertaken to assess the community perception about the same.

Aims: To assess the awareness and perception about generic medicines among people visiting tertiary care hospitals in Mangalore.

Methods: This study was a hospital based cross-sectional study, conducted in two hospitals, one private hospital and another a government tertiary healthcare centre. A semi-structured questionnaire including socio-demographic variables and questions to assess the knowledge, attitude and perception about generic medicines and programmes pertaining to the same was given to the participants. The information obtained was analysed using SPSS version 17.0 for descriptive statistics.

Results: The study included 300 participants. 50% of the study participants were aware of the programme, of which 59.3% were from a private health setup. The main source of information was found to be friends and family (21.3%). More than half the people who were aware of the programme had never visited a generic medicine store (56%).

Conclusion: Knowledge regarding generic medicines was found to be minimal among the participants, especially from the people visiting the public health setup. Hence there is less than optimum utilization of these schemes.