

Family physicians' perceptions about antibiotic prescribing in primary care: a qualitative study

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Background

Antibiotic overprescribing is an important problem in Turkey. Turkey is one of the leader countries about antibiotic consumption in primary care. The rate of antibiotic prescription in primary care is about 33% in Turkey.

Material/Methods

To identify and understand family physicians' perceptions about antibiotic overprescribing in primary care, semi-structured interviews were performed with 13 family physicians in a national meeting from different parts of Turkey and used thematic content analysis.

References

- 1-Rico-Ferreira P, Curr Med Res Opin. 2015;31(7) :1319-22.
- 2-Dempsey PP. BMC Fam Pract. 2014 12;15:194.

Results

All the participants agreed with irrational and unnecessary antibiotic prescription in primary care setting especially upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs). They pointed out that the responsibilities of primary care physicians are not remarkable and different factors/reasons other than themselves were responsible for overprescribing.

Causes of overprescribing in primary care

- (1) pressure/demand of patient or patient's relatives, which was the one of major factors;
- (2) insufficiencies for basic laboratory facilities in primary health care centers;
- (3) inadequacies of education of family physicians, especially after graduation;
- (4) saving time and protect patient' complains;
- (5) misconceptions of other physicians especially specialists and pharmacists about over;
- (6) low respectability of family physicians in community; and
- (7) incentives from industry and pharmacists for antibiotic overprescription.

Strategies to decrease inappropriate antibiotic prescribing

- (1) improving diagnostic infrastructures in primary care centers;
- (2) qualifying education of family physicians;
- (3) public campaigns and educational materials for patients;
- (4) improving the reputation of family physicians in community; and
- (5) beclouding to access patients to antibiotics.

"It is critical issue for us to convince the patient or patient's relatives. Otherwise they complain to Ministry of Health and I have to defend myself in a difficult situation. The demands of patients is always one of major prescription reason for antibiotics." (GP2)

"We do not use laboratory test for Upper Respiratory Tract Infections in timely. If we send the samples to central laboratory the patient has to come after day. So it is impossible in our situation." (GP3)

Conclusion

Family physicians underlined the significance of patients' demands and pressure as the main cause for antibiotic prescribing. Family physicians concluded that insufficiencies in primary care centers contribute antibiotic overprescribing. Improving diagnostic infrastructure of primary care center could prevent irrational antibiotic prescribing.