

EVALUATION OF KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE AND ADHERENCE OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS AND COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS TO ASTHMA GUIDELINES IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Asthma is a heterogeneous disease that inflames and narrows the airways. It is identified with respiratory symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and cough. It has also been established that adherence to evidence-based guidelines may raise asthma control to optimal levels in both diagnosis and medical intervention. The objectives are to assess the knowledge, practice and adherence to asthma-management guidelines of general practitioners (GPs) and community pharmacists (CPs) in Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. A cross-sectional study was conducted in Pulau Pinang using a validated self-administered questionnaire. The knowledge, practice and adherence to asthma-management guidelines of GPs and CPs were captured using a 30-item questionnaire that prompted their responses using a mixture of closed-ended and Likert scale techniques. The questionnaires, together with a self-addressed stamped envelope for return, were mailed to 236 CPs and 300 GPs. The knowledge of both CPs and GPs on asthma was slightly above average, and there was no significant difference between the two groups (65.9% for CPs and 67.2% for GPs, $p = 0.933$). Overall, GPs have better practice than CPs, with a mean score of 4 or higher for most practice questions. GPs have a significantly higher tendency to follow the asthma guidelines (71.9%), whereas less than half of the CPs (46.4%) adhere to them. Only 40.6% of GPs and 3.5% of CPs mentioned the name of the guidelines they followed. Our findings show that although CPs and GPs have similar levels of knowledge, GPs have better practice and adherence to guidelines than CPs.

Keywords: General practitioners, Community pharmacists, Knowledge, Practice, Adherence, Guidelines

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