GENERAL MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MEDICATION

Farooq Bashir Butt¹, Syed Nisar Hussain Shah² and Muhammad Tayyab¹

¹Department of Pharmacy, Punjab Institute of Mental Health Lahore, Pakistan
²Department of Pharmacy, Bahauddin Zakaria University, Multan, Pakistan

Dear Editor

Many misconceptions prevail in our society regarding health issues and use of medicines. As health professionals, we want to share the most common misconceptions in patients and public. The patients themselves go to the medical facilities and demand doctors and even quacks to infuse dextrose water because they think it beneficial for their body energy and general wellbeing. Normally, qualified and professionally trained doctors discourage such irrational patient demands. No extra benefit from dextrose infusion is expected if a person can take food by mouth. Infusions are indicated only in certain clinical situations (Hyman and Hirshfeld, 1933). If the oral intake is not possible such as vomiting or patient’s unconsciousness, intravenous route is the only choice. Unfortunately, public have no awareness and knowledge about the medications. They spend and ultimately waste their money by insisting on such unethical practices and are fleeced by unscrupulous elements in the health system. People also go to a physician or a quack with some medical problem and specifically ask for injection for early relief and recovery of their ailments. Medically injections are unnecessary for a patient if there is no clinical emergency. Oral medicines are equally effective and best in most of the situations. According to Khan et al. (2000), if oral and injected medications are equally effective, injections should be used only to those patients where it is safe and clinically indicated to prevent injection-associated infections. There are the chances of life threatening reactions (anaphylactic shock) from these injections, particularly if given without the supervision of qualified doctor. There are rampant examples present in our society wherein a patient died just because of unwarranted use of injections which could have been averted if medicines were taken orally. There is also a risk of Hepatitis B and C, and AIDS if the injections were not appropriate. Patients who received more injections are more likely to be infected with hepatitis C (Khan et al 2000). But due to ignorance and prevalent misconceptions, even educated people commit such mistakes. There is a famous saying in the medicine profession that “take your medicine orally if your gut is working”.

Another issue which also needs attention of general masses is colossal misuse of antibiotics. Mostly people do not know that there is minimum duration of antibiotics course to cure some sort of infection. Some pathological conditions need longer duration of antibiotics treatment such as typhoid and some orthopedic surgery. It is better to ask physician the duration of antibiotic course. Moreover, there are “five rights” of medicines. They are: right person is using the right medicines in right dose at a right time and in a right way. One day or two day of use of antibiotics is not beneficial; rather, it may be dangerous and may increase the probability of development of multidrug resistance (Zaidi et al., 2002). According to empirical studies conducted by Milatovic and Braveny (1987) emergence of resistance of infecting organism was associated with therapeutic failure in 85% of the cases. Mean resistance rates calculated were 9.2% for penicillins, 8.6% for second and third generation cephalosporins, 11.8% for Ciprofloxacin and 13.4% for aminoglycosides. Sometimes people themselves decrease the dose or the duration of antibiotic use based on their previous

*Corresponding author’s Address: Farooq Bashir Butt, Deputy Director Pharmacy, Punjab Institute of Mental Health, Lahore. Email: fbb164@gmail.com
Butt et al

concept of medicines being “hot”. The dose or the duration of treatment with antibiotics should not be reduced based on personal whims. Always ask a qualified doctor or a pharmacist about your disease and medicines and avoid seeking advice of all and sundry that are not entitled to give advice. There is need that proper policy may be formulated by government to safeguard the rights of people by giving due status to pharmacists as health managers of people (Middleton, 2005).

REFERENCES


