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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Knowledge and Attitude of Iraqi Pharmacists Regarding the Adverse Effects of NSAIDs Based on Years of Experience

ABSTRACT:

Objectives: Informing patients about the adverse effects of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) is essential to ensure their safe use. The aim of this study was to determine whether the years of experience of Iraqi pharmacists affect their knowledge of the renal and gastrointestinal adverse effects of NSAIDs, and their attitudes toward informing patients about drug safety.

Materials and Methods: An online cross-sectional survey was conducted between January and October 2023. A convenience sample of Iraqi pharmacists working in hospitals and/or community pharmacies answered a validated questions about demographics, knowledge, and attitudes regarding the adverse effects of NSAIDs.

Results: Of the 309 Iraqi pharmacists who participated, 46% had less than four years of experience. Eighty-five percent had good knowledge of the adverse effects of NSAIDs. Specifically, 83% of participants with good knowledge and ≥4 years of experience were younger than 35 years ($p=0.008$). Among participants with good knowledge and <4 years of experience, 93% had a bachelor's degree ($p=0.008$), and 57% worked from six to more than ten hours per day ($p=0.045$). The dispensing patterns of NSAIDs showed a highly significant association ($p<0.001$) with participant knowledge regardless of years of experience. Negative attitudes were reported more frequently among pharmacists with fewer years of experience than those with longer years of experience (73% vs. 71%, respectively; $p>0.05$). Sixty percent of the participants agreed that education about adverse drug reactions (ADRs) increases anxiety and medication nonadherence. Seventy-eight percent agreed that pharmacists and physicians could improve patients' knowledge of ADRs. Pharmacists believed that leaflets reduce patients' medication adherence (57%) but help patients improve their medication knowledge (51%; $p<0.05$) and monitor and report ADRs (56%; $p<0.05$).

Conclusion: Despite years of experience, good knowledge and negative attitudes were found regarding safety information for NSAIDs. Pharmacists and physicians play an important role in ensuring appropriate drug use. Leaflets serve as a source of information, but they can also lead to medication nonadherence.