

A prescription survey of non steroidal anti inflammatory drugs for arthritis in the public and private sector

Sri Lanka has an Essential Drugs List (EDL) from which doctors in the public sector prescribe but in the private sector there is no such restriction. Hence there could be variation in prescribing. This study was designed to compare and contrast the pattern of usage of Nonsteroidal Anti Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) in the two sectors.

A prescription survey conducted in a Pharmaceutical Corporation outlet (private sector) and in the Rheumatology Clinic, National Hospital of Sri Lanka (public sector). Gross NSAID utilization in the public and private sector were obtained over a 3 month period in 1997. Prescribing patterns in the private sector was studied (without informing the doctors) using 750 prescriptions with least one NSAID.

NSAIDs registered are diclofenac (27), indomethacin (11), ibuprofen (20), piroxicam (10), ketoprofen (1), sulindac (1), mefenamic acid (12), tenoxicam (1), naproxen (5), diflusal

(1) and tolfenamic acid (1) The monthly consumption of EDL NSAIDs in the clinic versus private sector were ibuprofen (43% vs. 25%), diclofenac (29%vs. 46%), and indomethacin (28% vs. 29%). On prescription analysis, NSAIDs in the EDL accounted for 66.9%. Diclofenac (48.7%), ibuprofen (11.6%) and indomethacin (6.6%). The NSAIDs outside the essential drug list totaled 33.1% Topical NSAIDs were prescribed in 4% and two NSAIDs were prescribed in 14.4%. There was an overall preference for branded generics (53.8%). The mean cost per day of commonly prescribed branded generic drugs was around Rs 8/=

The study shows that prescribing of NSAIDs in the private sector and public sector are within the EDL. Within the EDL, NSAIDs the popular drugs in the private sector were the average priced branded generics. In conclusion, having the EDL was shown to have an impact on the prescribing habits of NSAIDs in the private sector.