

Consumer perception on generic medicines in Basrah, Iraq: Preliminary findings from a qualitative study

Abstract

Background

The use of generic medicines has been increasing steadily internationally, primarily because of cost concerns. Knowledge and use patterns of generic medicines in Iraq have not yet been measured.

Objective

This study aimed to explore consumers' perception and knowledge on issues relating to generic medicine use in Basrah, Iraq.

Methods

A qualitative approach was used to gather information from consumers in Basrah, Iraq. A purposive sample of 14 consumers in Basrah was interviewed face-to-face using a semistructured interview guide.

Results

Thematic analysis of the interviews identified 5 major themes: understanding of the term “generic medicine,” preference for

generic medicine, refusal of generic medicine, generic substitution, and education on the use of generic medicines. Not all the consumers were familiar with the term “generic medicine;” they were familiar with the term “commercial medicine.” Most of the participants understood that generics cost less compared with their branded counterparts. Most of the consumers said that their physicians and pharmacists had given them information on generics.

Conclusion

Knowledge of generic medicines may be lacking among consumers in Iraq. Development of consumer education on generics by health care providers is required to support the implementation of the policy on generic medicines in Iraq.