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Rational use of antimalaria drugs in health facilities of Ethiopia, retrospective cross-sectional study, 2021-22

Abstract

Background:

Malaria is a major cause of morbidity and mortality in the developing countries. Appropriate use of recommended antimalarial drugs is vital in the effective management of malaria. Rational use of antimalarial drugs reduces the development of drug resistance and cost of therapy. Anti-malaria agents have been used for the management of malaria infections over the years in Ethiopia. However, not much is known about the quality of its use. Hence, we sought to evaluate the use of antimalarial drugs in six health facilities found in Ethiopia.

Objectives:

To evaluate the rational use of anti-malarial Drugs on the Management of Malaria Cases and the Rational Prescribing Practice of Antimalarial in six Ethiopian Health Facilities.

Methodology: A 1-year institution based retrospective cross-sectional study (chart review) was conducted from August 2021 to Sep 2022. Charts (Data) of 540 patients were reviewed on socio-demographics, rational use of anti-malarial agents as per 2021, guidelines and outcomes.

Results:

A total of 540 patient cards with malaria diagnosis and treatment were identified and reviewed. From the total assessed cards, 301 (55.7%) were male, 235 (43.5%) were female and gender was not specified for the remaining four (0.7%). Children under the age of 15 accounted for 30% of the total reviewed patients and the remaining 70% were adults aged 15 or above. The mean age of the patients was 22.86 years. With regard to the department where the service was provided, the majority (44.4%) were treated at inpatient department followed by at the outpatient department (26.4%) and emergency department (19.4%).

This assessment showed that 3 patients (0.6%) had history of ADR, 13.3% did not have history of ADR and the other patients were not assessed for ADR. With regard to self-medication with antimalarial drugs, only 13 patients (2.4%) were assessed for history of self-medication, among which two (0.4%) had history of self-treatment before seeking treatment at a health facility. This shows that there is a severe problem of documenting the medical history of patients while diagnosing and treating them for malaria.

From the total 463 laboratory tests, 386 (83.4%) were positive for malaria parasite and 65(14%) were negative; the result of the remaining 2.6% was not documented. This shows that 83.4% of the patients were diagnosed and treated for malaria after laboratory confirmation and 16.6% were treated clinically without lab confirmation. From the total positive laboratory tests, 212 (39%) were plasmodium Falciparum, 149 (27.6%) were Plasmodium Vivax and 4.6% were mixed species. With regard to severity of the diagnosis, the majority were severe malaria cases (39.1%), followed by uncomplicated malaria (23.3%) and others.

Key Words:

Anti-malarial drugs, drug use, malaria, resistance, drug availability

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