Assessing Pharmacist’s Knowledge about Lookalike and Sound Alike (LASA) Medications
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ABSTRACT

Introduction: LASA medication related errors account for up to 25% of all the dispensing errors occurring in hospitals. They have a huge impact on patient safety and quality of care. This cross sectional study assesses knowledge level of pharmacists in pharmaceutical industry versus hospitals. Moreover it also assesses error preventing strategies employed in both the fields.

Methodology: A cross sectional survey conducted in Karachi. Data collected from public/private hospital pharmacies and from pharmacists working in multinational/local pharmaceutical industries. Result: The self-proclaimed awareness of pharmacists about LASA medications was 93% in industrial pharmacists compared to 100% in hospital pharmacists. While actual knowledge was 70% industrial pharmacists and 87% hospital pharmacists. Knowledge level of pharmacists of both fields did not differ significantly (at p < 0.05) as per the type of organization (local/MNC, public/private) or with years of experience. Conclusions: Knowledge gap was identified in pharmacists of both fields, however more knowledge deficiency was observed in industrial pharmacists. The strategies adopted to curtail errors related to LASA drugs are significantly different between the groups for certain categories. The findings of this survey can be used to enhance awareness with ultimate aim to reduce medication errors and improve patient safety.

Keywords: patient safety, quality of care, pharmaceutical industry and LASA.