

A Study on Knowledge and Perception about Antimicrobial Stewardship Programmes among Bachelor of Pharmacy Students in Sri Lankan Universities

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Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a global health challenge. Inappropriate prescribing, dispensing and consumption promote the development and spread of AMR. Implementation of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) is an important strategy to control the spread of AMR. Pharmacists are important members of the healthcare team and essential components of AMS programmes. Current study aimed to investigate knowledge and perception regarding antimicrobial resistance and AMS concepts among Pharmacy undergraduates in Sri Lanka. It was conducted in five universities in Sri Lanka that offer a Bachelor of Pharmacy (B. Pharm) degree program. All 3rd and 4th year B. Pharm students in each university were included. Ethics approval was obtained before the data collection. This study used a self-administered questionnaire with descriptive data analyses to explore associations between different variables and level of knowledge on AMR and AMS. Among the respondents, 51% felt familiar with the term AMR. Interestingly, no one reported that they never heard about AMR. On the other hand, more than half of the students (53%) reported that they were not familiar with the AMS concepts. Additionally, there were 17% of respondents who had not heard the term AMS. Nearly all of the participants (99%) have agreed with the statement that appropriate knowledge of antimicrobials is important for the future career of pharmacists. A significant percentage of respondents (87%) reported that more training on AMS is essential. In conclusion, the study found that the knowledge and perception regarding AMS concepts were much lower (<30%) among the participants. Furthermore, participants reported that they prefer more academic training on AMR and AMS. Therefore, this study suggests that new interventional strategies are essential to improve teaching on the principles of AMS to enhance the knowledge and awareness among B. Pharm students in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Antimicrobial stewardship, Perception, Knowledge, Antimicrobial resistance, Pharmacy students, Sri Lanka