

The Role of Pharmacy and Therapeutic Committees in Pharmacovigilance and Drug Safety

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The healthcare facilities must have a system incorporated in order to detect, monitor, prevent and report any unsafe use of pharmaceuticals and to track the launch of newer ones. This tracking system can be achieved via the pharmacy and therapeutics committee (PTC) that represents the governing body of pharmaceuticals within any healthcare facility.

The PTC role-functioning is to establish proactive subcommittees for medication safety and drug utilization evaluation. These subcommittees within their term of references can expand their activities and draw action plans for each quarter and evaluate pattern of use of pharmaceuticals across their facilities. Furthermore, their action plan should state clearly the steps to be taken to run post-marketing surveillance for specific drug entities (to elucidate their potential risk) such as biologics, new oral anticoagulants (NOACs), Anti-platelets, anticonvulsants, antidepressants, antipsychotics, antibiotics, insulin, anti-diabetics, heparins, and any drug that poses potential risk to patients. In the absence of system in place, no reporting will take place and no clinical judgment can be obtained on these high-alert drugs.

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This role can be strengthened with pharmacovigilance tailored-research. Whereby, real population (not just similar) will be exposed to the drug on hand and specific conclusions pertaining to that population can be drawn and acted upon accordingly. We need more recognition of clinical pharmacists, as they are the most expert clinicians in this field. Supporting this role by organizational policies and bylaws can bring more safety-culture to our patients.

The clinical pharmacists representing the PTC can oversee all safe, economic and rational use of pharmaceuticals across the healthcare facility. The need for clinical pharmacists as leaders in the pharmacy profession will streamline these functions and ensure that pharmacovigilance principles and safe drug use are both in place.

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