

Research of Gastric Management and Hepatology

Short Communication

Community Pharmacovigilance and Risk Perception of Self-Medication in Urban Mexico Post-COVID-19

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between community pharmacovigilance and the perceived risks of self-medication in urban Mexico following the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a cross-sectional survey administered to 420 adult residents in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, the research identifies key factors influencing drug-use behavior and attitudes toward pharmaceutical safety. Results indicate that media exposure, health literacy, and institutional trust significantly shape individual perceptions and practices related to non-prescribed medication. The findings call for improved integration of pharmacovigilance programs with public education campaigns, especially in vulnerable post-pandemic settings.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic led to a substantial increase in self-medication practices globally, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. In Mexico, the accessibility of over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, coupled with pandemic-related stress and misinformation, has amplified pharmacological risks within the population. This paper examines how community-level pharmacovigilance can serve as a mitigating strategy to reduce adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and improve medication literacy in post-pandemic environments.

Methods

A non-experimental, cross-sectional design was employed. The sample consisted of 420 respondents aged 18 to 65, stratified by sex, education, and district. A validated 25-item Likert-scale questionnaire measured perceptions of drug safety, self-medication frequency, media influence, and trust in pharmaceutical regulations. Data were analyzed using SPSS v26, employing Pearson correlations and multiple regression to identify predictors of risky medication behavior.

Results

Self-medication was reported by 63% of participants in the last six months, primarily for pain relief, respiratory symptoms, and anxiety. High media consumption correlated with elevated perceptions of drug efficacy but reduced concern for side effects. Trust in local pharmacies and low awareness of pharmacovigilance programs were significant predictors of unmonitored drug use. Regression analysis indicated that health literacy ($\beta = -.31, p < .01$) and institutional trust ($\beta = -.25, p < .05$) were negative predictors of self-medication frequency.

Discussion

The study reveals that pharmacovigilance efforts remain limited in their reach at the community level, particularly in urban zones where informal pharmaceutical advice is common. Enhancing the visibility and credibility of pharmacovigilance programs through media partnerships and digital platforms could counteract misinformation and foster safer self-care practices.

Conclusion

Community pharmacovigilance offers a crucial, yet underutilized, avenue for mitigating the risks of self-medication in urban Mexico. Policy frameworks should integrate public engagement strategies to raise awareness of drug safety, especially among populations with low health literacy. Post-COVID pharmacological governance must go beyond clinical surveillance and engage citizens as active stakeholders in medication safety.

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