

AB043. Biosimilar medicines: a cross-sectional study on hospital pharmacists' perceived confidence and barriers to promote prescribing among clinicians in Malaysia

Noraisyah Mohd Sani^{1,2}, Zoriah Aziz^{1,3}, Adeeba Kamarulzaman¹

¹Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; ²Pharmacy Services Programme, Ministry of Health Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia; ³Faculty of Pharmacy, MAHSA University, Bandar Saujana Putra, Jenjarom, Selangor, Malaysia

Correspondence to: Zoriah Aziz. Faculty of Medicine, University of Malaya, Lembah Pantai, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Email: zoriah@um.edu.my.

Background: The use of biosimilar medicines offers potential cost savings in healthcare. As biosimilars become more widely available, pharmacists are better positioned to spearhead the appropriate and safe administration of biosimilars among clinical prescribers. Thus, we aimed to determine pharmacists' perceived confidence and barriers towards promoting the use of biosimilars in clinical practice among clinical prescribers in Malaysia.

Methods: We conducted a cross-sectional study using a web-based survey involving all registered pharmacists working in Malaysian hospitals. We refined the questionnaire from previous studies and piloted it before finalising the 41-items questionnaire. We analysed the data descriptively.

Results: From a total of 913 responses received, 65.9% of pharmacists have dealt with biosimilar medicines in their workplace. Most of them (87.4%) had a good basic knowledge related to marketing authorisation requirements of biosimilars. On the aspect of how confident they would be in promoting a switch to a biosimilar in patients currently receiving the originator product, about 50% of them were confident. The major barriers cited to promote prescribing

of biosimilars medicines included efficacy concerns (68.7%), prescribers' preferences (64.6%), insufficient information resources (51.4%) and lack of knowledge (43.0%).

Conclusions: The findings show a lack of perceived confidence among pharmacists in promoting biosimilars to clinical prescribers. One of the main barriers identified was the lack of knowledge or training on biosimilars. These data provide preliminary information needed to introduce educational programs in the undergraduate pharmacy curriculum and launch continuing educational programmes among the pharmacists to improve their overall confidence.

Keywords: Pharmacists; barriers; originator product; biosimilar medicines

Acknowledgments

Funding: None.

Footnote

Conflicts of Interest: The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Ethical Statement: The authors are accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

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doi: 10.21037/jphe-21-ab043

Cite this abstract as: Mohd Sani N, Aziz Z, Kamarulzaman A. Biosimilar medicines: a cross-sectional study on hospital pharmacists' perceived confidence and barriers to promote prescribing among clinicians in Malaysia. J Public Health Emerg 2021;5:AB043.