Cost analysis of emergency medicines in a developing country, India

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Background: Safety, efficacy & affordability of all medicines are necessary for the prevention & treatment of diseases in the community. In case of emergency conditions it becomes necessary to manage serious threats to the survival and health of the affected patients in time. Keeping in view poor socio-economic status of majority of the population in developing countries & consumption of major share of health budget for emergencies, the present study was proposed to explore the possibilities of reduction in expenditure on emergency medicines

Methods: Injectable, oral & topical formulations of emergency medicines, from Emergency Medicines List (EML) 2014-WHO & National List of Essential Medicines 2015, India, having different bioequivalent brands in the same strength, dosage form & quantity, were analysed for their costs in the Indian Market, to detect possible percentage cost reduction for the same formulation.

Results: Total no. of brands were 928 for 112 medicines for emergency health care with possible cost reduction from 8.65% to 94.43%. Possible cost reduction for 96 injectables with 713 brands was 8.65% to 87.78%, for 8 oral formulations with 169 brands was 12.5% to 94.43% & for 8 topical formulations with 46 brands was 10.25% to 32.46%. Average possible reduction in cost was observed 43.82%.

Conclusions: Emergency medicines are available in many brands with variable costs. Prescription of most economical bioequivalent brand of the required formulation can reduce expenditure on majority of emergency medicines significantly. Promotion of generic drugs & awareness about rational use of medicines may have supraadditive effect in providing cost effective treatment.

Keywords: Cost analysis, emergency medicines, economical brand.