

CHAPTER 17

PRESCRIPTION WRITING AND RATIONAL USE OF DRUGS

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1. What is a prescription?

A prescription is a written order from a licenced physician, dentist, or veterinarian for the preparation and/or dispensing of pharmacological agents for a patient. For both the prescriber and the pharmacist, it is a legal document. Over the counter (OTC) drugs are a class of drugs that can be obtained without a prescription. These drugs are safe and can be self-administered. Antacids, antidiarrheals, antipyretics, and antiseptics are included in the OTC category. Prescription drugs are those that require a prescription from a licenced prescriber before being dispensed by a pharmacist.

2. Types of prescription: Prescriptions are categorized into two types.

- A) Precompounding and
- B) Extemporaneous.

Precompounded prescriptions are drugs that are supplied in a ready-to-use form by pharmaceutical companies under a nonproprietary or trade name. For instance: Cap Rifampicin 150 mg (nonproprietary name) or Cap Firifam 150 mg (a trade name)

Extemporaneous prescription-The pharmacist prepares the medication according to the drugs, doses, and dosage form specified by the physician. This method is no longer used nowadays.

3. Prescription construction: An ideal prescription should include the following information: a) the physician's name, qualification, registration number, full address, telephone number, and working hours; b) the patient's full name, sex, age, and address; c) the diagnosis, drug preparation, total amount, frequency of administration advices, and the prescriber's signature.

The drug preparation's name begins with the symbol Rx, which is derived from a Roman symbol for Jupiter.

- 4. Prescription incompatibility:** A prescriber's lack of competency or carelessness results in an incompatible prescription. It may result in the patient's failure to achieve the desired therapeutic goal, as well as harm or death. Pharmaceutical, chemical, or therapeutic incompatibility are all possibilities.
- 5. Patient compliance:** Prescribers are concerned about patient noncompliance, which is defined as a patient's failure to take medication as prescribed by their doctors. Inadequate dosing, incorrect timing, and premature drug discontinuation are all examples of noncompliance.

6. **Rational use of drugs:** According to WHO. Patients should receive medications that are appropriate to their clinical needs, in doses that meet their own requirements for an adequate period of time, and at the lowest cost to them and their community.
7. **Criteria for rational prescribing:** Appropriate diagnosis, indication, drug, patient, dosage, duration, route of administration, information, and monitoring are all criteria for rational prescribing.
8. **Irrational prescription:** Irrational practises include the overuse of antibiotics, indiscriminate injections, and excessive drug use, anabolic steroids for growth, and tonics and multivitamins for malnutrition.

To prevent irrational prescribing, the following steps should be taken: a) correct diagnosis; b) limiting the number of drugs prescribed; c) encouraging the availability of essential drugs; d) providing adequate training, drug information, and Standard Treatment Guidelines (STG) to prescribers, incorporating the concept of essential drugs; e) teaching rational prescribing in medical, pharmacy, dentistry, and nursing curricula.

Questions

- i. What do you mean by compliance?
- ii. Describe about the irrational prescribing, dispensing and use of drugs?