



VAGARIES OF "P"

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Accepted on: 20-08-2010; Finalized on: 10-02-2011.

ABSTRACT

The concept of P drug and P treatment shows that for common complaints the treatment of first choice may or may not include any drugs. Occasionally advice and information may be sufficient. Doctors must not be overconfident that he/she is the only person the patient is consulting. Careful history of prior treatment must be elicited before any decision on P drug and P treatment is taken to avoid drug interactions. P drug and P treatment when successful can be attributed to knowledge, experience and presence of mind of the doctor and good fortune on the part of the patient.

Keywords: P drug, P treatment, Vagaries.

P DRUG

A doctor may treat several patients with similar symptoms on any given day. It is indeed knowledge and experience that make most doctors select the correct medication for each of such patients. How the doctor manages to choose right drug for each patient remains the question? A single best explanation could be experience. However it is the P Drug concept which usually helps a doctor chooses the best drug for his patient for a particular condition¹.

P drug is from a personal list of drugs. The drugs enlisted reflect evidence based selection of treatment of first choice for common ailments; a doctor is likely to face in his professional life. These drugs are prescribed regularly and are the priority choice for given indications. The concept of P drugs not only includes the name of pharmacological substances but also dosage form, dosage schedule and duration of treatment for a particular indication¹.

P drugs differ from country to country and physician to physician because of variability, cost of drugs, National Formulatories, Essential Drug List, medical culture and belief of a particular country¹.

P TREATMENT

P treatment on the other hand consist of giving health advice and information, non-drug therapy, drug treatments, referral for treatment, or combinations of these. Doctors should never jump to the conclusion of prescribing a P-treatment directly just as is done when selecting P-drugs. Efficacy, safety, suitability and cost should be the criteria while considering P- treatment options.²

In an example the therapeutic objective in the treatment of an open wound is to promote healing and to prevent infection. The inventory of possible treatment is²:

- **Advice and Information:** Regularly inspect the wound; repeat visit in case of wound infection or fever.
- **Non-drug treatment:** Clean and dress the wound
- **Drug treatment :**
 - (a) Antitetanus prophylaxis (After taking history of previous immunization)
 - (b) Antibiotics (local, systemic) if required.
- **Referral for treatment:** Not essential.

P-treatment for a superficial open wound is to clean and dress the wound, give antitetanus prophylaxis and advice on regular wound inspection. Antibiotics usage depends upon the case.

In more serious example, e.g. (a) persistent constipation (b) serious dehydration in a small child (c) a deep open wound, action of choice may be referral to a tertiary care institute, and no change in drugs in P treatment is advisable at the existing primary center of treatment. Referral can therefore also be called as a component of P-treatment, e.g. when no facilities exist for further examination or treatment at the primary center². However cultural and local beliefs and customs may overshadow P treatment especially in the developing world.

CONCLUSION

The concept of P drug and P treatment shows that for common complaints the treatment of first choice may or may not include any drugs. Occasionally advice and information may be sufficient. Doctors must not be overconfident that he/she is the only person the patient is consulting. Careful history of prior treatment must be elicited before any decision on P drug and P treatment is



taken to avoid drug interactions. P drug and P treatment when successful can be attributed to knowledge, experience and presence of mind of the doctor and good fortune on the part of the patient.

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