

NOTIFICATION OF UNDESIRABLE EFFECTS OF COSMETIC PRODUCTS BY PHARMACISTS AND DERMATOLOGISTS: A PILOT PROJECT

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Despite the widespread use of cosmetic products the rate of undesirable effects (UEs) is relatively low probably because they are underestimated. This is in part due to the absence of formal and reliable systems for monitoring UEs caused by cosmetics. A cosmetovigilance (CV) system should give more information on the severity of ACRs, since on a population level it is really not known. To this aim we have set up a system for UE notification in collaboration with dermatologists and pharmacists belonging to our regional territory to underline the potential role of such health professionals in a CV system and to set up an appropriate reporting form to improve the quality of collected data. So we experienced a notification form for pharmacists and a different one for dermatologists. Collection of reporting forms began in July 2006. Up to January 2007 the number of collected forms was 31, of them 23 were sent by dermatologists and 8 by pharmacists. The subjects who experienced the events were 25 female and 6 male with a mean age of 37.19 ± 16.34 years. No statistical significant difference was observed between females and males concerning the age. Cosmetic classes apparently responsible for the reported UEs were mainly related to products dedicated to the eyes. Of them some were eye contour treatment and other eye make-up products. Perfumes and fragrances were also considered as potentially responsible for the observed events and interestingly two of the three UEs were observed in atopic patients. Moreover it is interesting to note that in some cases the UEs have been assessed as dependent on an incorrect use of the cosmetic. This is the case of solar products for the body which have been applied to the face. In regard to the nature of the UEs they were of cutaneous type and diagnosed by dermatologists mainly as allergic contact dermatitis (52%) and irritative contact dermatitis (48%). Itching and burning were the most frequent symptoms reported in the pharmacist notification form. No systemic events were observed. The incompleteness and imprecision were sometimes detected during the analysis of the forms. On the basis of our experience one of the main aspect for an efficient CV system is the notification form which guarantees reliability and quality of the information. In fact a notification form must include a minimum set of data to be used in order to validate the received report. Only validated forms (presence of minimum relevant information), after a careful evaluation (symptomatology, chronology, etc), can be subjected to causality assessment. Moreover a reliable and of good quality report certainly facilitates the exchange of information among different countries.