

PROMOTING CONTINUING EDUCATION IN PHARMACOVIGILANCE: THE EXPERIENCE OF “PHARMASEARCH”, A NETWORK OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS REPORTING ADVERSE DRUG REACTIONS.

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Aims:

To improve adverse drug reactions (ADRs) spontaneous reporting among general practitioners (GPs) and to provide them continuing education on drug safety and rational use of medicines.

Materials

The network of reporting GPs called “Pharmasearch” was set up in 2002 as a collaboration between the Department of Medicine and Pharmacology of the University of Messina (Coordinating Centre, CC) and the Italia Society of General Practice (SIMG). A group of GPs voluntarily forward to the CC a copy of each ADR reporting form filed in. The CC, after receiving the form, provides reporters with an personalised comment to the ADR reported, according to data retrieved from international literature. Moreover, GPs periodically receive reports about the activities of the network, including regular updates illustrating ADRs received, drugs implicated, etc. All cases of interest are studied in depth and spread to all participating GPs. Furthermore, a periodic bulletin ([Inform@rete](#)) is sent to participants, describing topics and news coming from international literature and regulatory agencies. This, in order to sensitise GPs about the importance of reporting ADRs and to keep them updated on the safety profiles of drugs and their correct use. To achieve this goal, a specific section of the website www.farmacovigilanza.org (SIMGxFarmacovigilanza) has also been created, containing case reports published on the basis of GPs reported ADRs. A forum of discussion dedicated to pharmacovigilance and appropriateness of drug prescription is also planned.

Results

To date (February 2007), the Pharmasearch network includes a total of 360 GPs and 2483 reports have been received. The increasing number of GPs joining to this educational project and the constant improvement in the quantity and quality of their reports (accounting for 6.5% of total Italian reports in 2006) underlines the importance of providing constant feedback information to sensitize healthcare professionals about the risks of drug use.