Individualised feedback reduces prescription of antibiotics

By DTI
CAMBRIDGE, UK: While dentists only prescribe 10 per cent of all antibiotics in the UK, they often prescribe them inappropriately. Over prescription of antibiotics could be reduced to some extent if practitioners receive individualised feedback about their prescription practices the results of a trial, published in the PLOS Medicine journal, among NHS dentists in Scotland have indicated.

In a study involving all 795 antibiotic-prescribing general dentistry practices in the country, a group of researchers from Dundee, Aberdeen and Glasgow sent out graphic plots of the monthly prescription rates of each dentist at the respective practices, which were randomly selected. Some of these practices were also sent a written behaviour change message reiterating national recommendations.

After 12 months, the rate of prescriptions was compared to those of practices that had received neither graphs nor messages. The researchers found an overall reduction of 5 per cent in the group that had received the feedback.

Although the intervention achieved a slight reduction, the researchers suggested that multifaceted measures like audit and feedback intervention might offer no advantage over single measures because of their complexity and the overall costs involved. They, however, emphasised the need to develop new strategies to change health professionals’ prescribing behaviour.

Previous studies have found that, despite clinical guidelines, antibiotic prescriptions are often given by dentists without clinical need.

Last year, medical bodies in the UK, including the British Dental Association, joined the One Health initiative in order to promote responsible use of antibiotics in dentistry and other fields of medicine.

The study, titled “An audit and feedback intervention for reducing antibiotic prescribing in general dental practice: The RAPID cluster randomised controlled trial”, was published on 30 August in PLOS Medicine.

Infection scare dentist struck off

By DTI
LONDON, UK: The General Dental Council (GDC) has struck off a Nottingham dentist responsible for the largest recall of patients in the history of the NHS from its register last month.

Desmond D’Mello was removed for reasons of misconduct owing to 55 allegations of failure to maintain basic standards of infection control or prescribe antibiotics without a thorough assessment of patients’ needs.

As a result, more than 22,000 patients were offered a recall for blood tests owing to the risk of exposure to infection in 2014.

His actions were revealed by a whistleblower, who recorded some of the failings on video. The films showed that he did not change his gloves or surgical mask and wiped his hands on his trousers instead of washing them, among other grossly hazardous practices.

In connection with D’Mello, the GDC also subjected one of his co-workers, a dental nurse who worked in the same practice, to conditional registration for a period of 12 months. She has admitted to 27 of the allegations, the council said.

“Mr D’Mello has abused the trust of his patients in exposing them to serious risk of harm and subjected those patients affected to an appalling and agonising ordeal as they undergo invasive blood-testing,” commented the chairperson of the GDC’s Professional Conduct Committee, Gavin Scott, on the decision. “His behaviour is fundamentally incompatible with being a dental professional, and his behaviour is so damaging to public confidence in the dental profession.”

D’Mello did not attend any of the hearings or have legal representation. In a letter to the GDC last year, he applied for voluntary erasure from the GDC register.

He stated too that he had no intention of ever practising dentistry again.

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