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Abstracts
PHARMACEUTICAL CARE ISSUES ENCOUNTERED BY POSTMENOPAUSAL OSTEOPOROTIC WOMEN PRESCRIBED BISPHOSPHONATES

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Background: No data exist regarding the value of pharmacist monitoring pharmaceutical care issues encountered by postmenopausal osteoporotic women prescribed bisphosphonates.

Objective: To document pharmaceutical care issues encountered by postmenopausal osteoporotic women prescribed bisphosphonates over a two-year period.

Methods: A randomized controlled trial was conducted from September 2005 to February 2009 in the University Malaya Medical Centre, Malaysia. Inclusion criteria: postmenopausal women diagnosed with osteoporosis (with a T-score ≤ -2.5/low-trauma fracture), and prescribed weekly bisphosphonates. Intervention participants received information on osteoporosis, risk factors, lifestyle modifications, goals of therapy and side effects at months 0, 3, 6 and 12. The control group received standard pharmacy care. This paper focused only on the pharmaceutical care issues encountered by participants in this study.

Results: Of the 198 participants recruited (intervention=100, control=98), 64 (32.3%) experienced adverse effects due to bisphosphonate therapy, while 1 (0.5%) refused to start therapy due to fear of side effects. Most adverse effects (50 (74.6%)) were reported during the first three months of therapy with gastrointestinal problems being the main issue [23 (11.6%)]. Nine participants (4.5%) discontinued their bisphosphonates due to adverse drug effects. These include upper GI adverse effects (5 participants), severe muscle or leg cramp (3 participants) and lethargy (one participant). After two years, 36 (20%) were no longer persistent with therapy, 19 (10.6%) did not have clinical follow-up and 53 (26.8%) did not have a bone mineral density scan.

Limitations: Data was collected from a convenient sample. Therefore, findings may not be generalized to all Malaysian postmenopausal women with osteoporosis.

Conclusions: The main pharmaceutical care issues identified were related to the use of bisphosphonates and its side effects. The study showed that the presence of a clinical pharmacist enable numerous medication-related issues to be detected and appropriate recommendation and action. This further indicates the importance of pharmaceutical care.