AUS-69 – WHO Collaborating Centre for Pharmacoeconomics and Rational Pharmacotherapy

Discipline of Clinical Pharmacology, University of Newcastle, Australia

Terms of Reference:

1. To support advocacy, exchange of information and experiences in the development, implementation and evaluation of national medicines policies, and other relevant activities for ensuring access to essential medicines.

2. To update training materials, undertake training and to provide support on evidence based medicines selection and economic evaluation of interventions adapted to the situation in low and middle income countries.

3. To support research programs for improving access to affordable medicines and their rational use in low and middle income countries, in collaboration with other collaborating centres and relevant ongoing initiatives.

4. To continue to work with other academic and professional groups and international organizations to promote clinical pharmacologists as agents in the implementation of national medicines policies, and to promote national medicines policies and the concepts of essential medicines and rational use of medicines in the undergraduate teaching of health professionals in low and middle income countries.

Centre staff and expertise:

The members of the Collaborating Centre include pharmacists, nurses, biomedical scientists, health economists, and clinical pharmacologists. The specific expertise offered includes training and advice on:

- Pharmacoeconomic evaluation and health technology assessment
- Literature searching and critical appraisal of the evidence
- Pharmacoepidemiological study design and evaluation
- Development and implementation of clinical guidelines relating to medicines

Key work of the Centre:

Support for development and implementation of national medicines policies

Staff members of the Centre have been involved in medicine policy development and implementation in Australia, and have helped support and promote medicines policies in the Asia-Pacific region.

This has included hosting a regional conference on national medicines policies, and local support through site visits to develop and implement clinical guidelines relating to medicines.

Training in pharmacoeconomics and rational drug selection

The Centre has developed and delivered short courses in drug selection for national formularies. The courses offered range from 5 to 10 days and can be tailored to each country or area. The key topics covered include:

- Critical appraisal of clinical trials
- Critical evaluation of systematic reviews
- Introduction to costs in pharmacoeconomic assessments
- Simple economic models
- Measuring and using Quality of Life in pharmacoeconomic evaluations
- Critical appraisal of pharmacoeconomic analyses

Other optional modules include:

- Literature searching
- ABC analysis
- Managing drug prices

A key feature of the course is that it is based on small-group problem-based learning, and gives participants practical, hands-on experience in all topics covered.

Significant achievements:

Asia Pacific Conference on National Medicines Policies

The conference, organised by the Centre, was held in Sydney, Australia in May 2012. It was a follow up to the first International Conference on National Medicinal Drug Policy held in 1995. Over 230 participants attended from 45 countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Across the three days participants discussed how to implement national medicine policies. Common challenges identified included access to medicines, antibiotic resistance, and rational use of medicines. Capacity building in the areas of pharmaceutical regulation, evaluation of medicines for reimbursement programs, and the monitoring of medicine use were seen as important next steps.

Details can be found at: www.apcnmp2012.com.au

Short courses in pharmacoeconomics and rational drug selection

Short courses have been run since 1999 and held in over 10 countries. Some countries, such as South Africa, have run courses more than once. Most have been run for one particular country, but some, such as those in Turkey and Thailand, also included international participants. Each course has involved between 20 and 50 participants, and has required three to five teaching faculty from both the Centre and invited international colleagues.

The short courses have been universally rated as successful and useful by the participants:

“It was a very useful course – I enjoyed my time very much. The best thing about the course was the way that you made us think about the case you gave us and then discuss it together” (Jordan, 2014)

“Provides clear step-by-step methods on understanding analysis” (Brunei, 2008)

The plan now is to evaluate the long-term impact of the courses.

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