

DRUG INFORMATION

A Brief Introduction on Drug Information Agencies in Nepal

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Introduction

Information is the knowledge communicated by others and knowledge obtained from study, investigation, and instruction and communication media. Drug without information is simply a chemical or a substance. Information is must for the proper use of synthesized potent chemical compound known as drug which is used as preventive and curing agent of any diseases. Therefore, although none of the drug is absolutely safe but appropriate information on available drugs would help to use it safely for its maximum benefit. Drug information is one of the most valuable tools of medical professionals, consumers, dispensers, and researchers. Lack of proper unbiased information on drugs may hinder the rational use of drugs which is, in another words, right drug, right dose, right route, right length of time, right price plus other unbiased information on drug.

In developing countries like Nepal, it is not easy to have access to independent information on drugs because of very limited availability of latest scientific literature books, journals and also poor documentation, poor or not hospital pharmacies/drug and therapeutic committees. Unavailability of standard drug treatment schedule, formularies and unethical promotional activities may further aggravate irrational drug use. Therefore, as an initiative to improve information service, National Drug Policy 1995, HMG has taken strategy to effectively develop an efficient Drug Information System to disseminate whatever little information we can made available about proper use of drugs, adverse reaction, contraindication, toxicity, standard and efficacy, poisoning etc. to all concerned through different media including publication of National Drug Formulary, STS, EDL.

A single organization may not have enough expertise, resources, and interest to satisfactorily meet the drug information needs of all various target groups. With all above facts, Drug Information Network of Nepal (DINoN) was established on 23rd Sept. 1996 with multisectoral participation consisting of Government Health Institutions, University and NGOs related to health and drugs in the initiative of HMG, Dept. of Health Services and Dept. of Drug Administration with the support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Rational Pharmaceutical Management (RPM) project carried out by Management Sciences for Health (MSH) and United States Pharmacopoeia (USP) to provide unbiased information on drugs.

Role of DINoN

There are couples of studies done on drug use at different level of health facilities and private sector indicated that there has been noticeable multi drug prescribing practices, 50.7% of prescription containing antibiotics and 51.6% essential drug (ED). About 65% of sick population obtains medication from unqualified practitioners. In 1975, World Health Organization (WHO) stated: "The rational use of drugs requires that patients receive medicines appropriate to their clinical needs, in dose that meet their own individual requirements, and at the lowest cost to them and the community". In summary, this means:- the right drug; the right indication; the correct route; appropriate patient information and appropriate cost.

Similarly, the irrational use to drug is a worldwide problem. In different countries and cultures the drugs given may be different, but the underlying problem of the wrong drug or the wrong patient or the wrong route remains there to emphasize underline importance of drug information. Therefore, the prime goal of establishing DINoN could be envisaged as to provide unbiased and accurate drug information. The information provided includes indications, adverse drug reaction, contra-indications, interactions, dosing details, special precautions including drug use in pregnancy and lactation, drug poisoning, availability, storage and cost etc. Pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics and drug regulations are also very important to be considered. It is aimed at providing service to the public at large by the multi-sectoral participation involved in providing services of different clientele group. (Table 1)

DINON Members:

- v Department of Drug Administration (DDA): It is the main drug regulatory authority under Ministry of Health.
- v Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH): It is a Major Hospital under Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine.
- v Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC): It is a council for regulating and monitoring health research.
- v Nepal Chemists and Druggists Association (NCDA): It is a non-governmental organization of drug retailers and wholesalers working at national level.
- v Resource center for primary health care (RECPHEC): Is a primary health worker and consumer oriented non-governmental organization.

Table: 1 Question answering service by the DINoN Member sites

Service process Site	Department of Drug Administration	Drug Information	Nepal Health Research	Nepal Chemists & Druggist Association	Resource Center For Primary Health Leaders
Primary audience	Ministry officials, drug manufacturers & traders, health professionals, clinicians paramedics.	Prescribing doctors pharmacists, nurse, medical students	Health researchers	Chemists, patients care givers	Consumers, journalists community leaders
Secondary audience	Clinicians, paramedics	Patients, caregivers	Patients, caregivers, community leaders	Medical professionals manufactures, nursing homes	Researchers, primary health workers, NGO's students
Information provided	Mainly regulatory and legal issue; product; availability	Drugs facts and therapeutic information	Research and drug related information	Mainly on availability brand names storage, prices, patient counselling	Mainly consumer related drug and health information provision of reference materials
Modes of inquiry and response	Telephone, letter, person-to-person	Telephone, Fax, E-mail, letter person to person	Telephone, letter person to person	Telephone, Fax, E-mail, letter, person to person	Telephone, Fax E-mail, letter person to person
Time of operation	10 am to 5 PM Sunday to Friday	9 am to 12 PM Sunday to Friday	10 am to 5 PM Sunday to Friday	11 am to 6 PM Sunday to Friday	1 am to 5 PM Sunday to Friday
Contact Address	Bijuli Bazar, Kathmandu Nepal	Maharajgunj, Kathmandu, Nepal, P.O. Box 3578	Ramshah Path Kathmandu Nepal, P.O. Box 7626	6/385 Tebahal, Kathmandu, Nepal P.O. Box 1337	Bagbazar, KTM Nepal P.O. Box 117
Contact Number	Phone/Fax 977-1-490227 Email: dda@healthnet.org.np	Phone: 977-1-416959 Email: diu@healthnet.org.np	Phone: 977-1-254220 Fax 977-1-228069 Email: nhre@helathnet.org.np	Phone: 977-1-223548 Email: neda@healthnet.org.np	Phone/Fax 977-1-225675 Email: reephee@healthnet.org.np.

The DINoN member has got access to different information sources: Internet etc. besides reference books, periodicals, journals, formularies, pharmacopoeia etc. and CD ROM (Nepal Drug Information Database) provided by USPDI under USAID/RPM/USP program.

ACTIVITIES:

The information dissemination activities are routinely conducted by the individual member organizations within their working sphere independently through various publications, notifications and letters.

(Table 2)

Table 2: Publications by DInoN member sites

Details of the bulletin	Department of Drug Administration	TU Teaching Hospital Drug Information unit	Nepal Health Research Council	Nepal Chemists & Druggists Association	Resources Center For Primary Health Care
Name	Drug Bulletin of Nepal	Drug & Therapeutic letter	Upabhokta i.e. Jannai PameTathayaharu and various health and drug related information	Nepal Chemists & Druggists Association Bulletin	Bhalakushari
Frequency	Every 4 month	Every-2 month		Monthly	Every-month
Target users	Drug Traders,Mfg., pharmacists and health workers	Prescribing Dr. Postgraduate medical students & Pharmacists		Drug retailers Wholesalers, and importers	Consumers and grassroots level health workers community workers

DISSEMINATION :

DInoN disseminates drug related information especially on drug interaction, adverse drug interaction, misuse and abuse of medicines/drugs, awareness on drug legislation, availability of drug product (generic & brand name), contraindication, drug prescribing, precaution including drug use in pregnancy and lactation and consumers counselling. For dissemination of information, DInoN uses modern communication tools like e-mail, telephone, computer, fax and also poster, local papers, reference books, bulletins and newsletters.

TYPES OF QUESTIONS ASKED:

Side effects, availability, regulatory information, contraindication, drug-interaction, and indication. The above figure indicates that the publicity, referrals and pro-active activities of DInoN members have influenced the information-seeking behaviour of different target groups.

CONCLUSION:

It is no doubt information providing services are rendered by different organization at their own level to their clients. It is that there should be permanent working committee in order to provide organized and uniform information services. This would enhance exchange of ideas updating available information and uniform dissemination of information. To keep DInoN members active routine working committee meeting should be conducted at different member site rotationally. To make the DInoN services available extensively organization active in the fields in different regions should be taken into consideration for new membership.

Reference:

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