

Antibiotic Prescribing for Upper Respiratory Tract Infections in Sarawak District Hospitals

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SUMMARY

Upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) is mostly viral in aetiology, but patients presenting with such complaints are frequently prescribed antibiotics. This may result in increased development of antimicrobial resistance. The objectives of this study are to determine the choice and proportion of oral antibiotics prescribed in patients with URTI, in a Sarawak district hospital setting. All outpatient prescriptions received in July 2011 in 10 hospitals with relevant diagnoses were analysed. A total of 6747 URTI prescriptions met the inclusion criteria, and 64.8% (95% CI 63.7%, 65.9%) had antibiotic prescribed. Medical Assistants (MAs) were significantly more likely to prescribe antibiotics compared to Medical Officers (MOs) ($p < 0.001$). Prescribers were significantly influenced by the patient's age and specific diagnosis when prescribing antibiotics for URTI ($p < 0.001$). Antibiotic choices differed between MOs and MAs, where some of the antibiotic choices were inappropriate. There is a need for multi-faceted interventions to improve antibiotic prescribing rate and choice.

KEY WORDS:

Upper respiratory tract infection, antibiotics, district hospital, prescribing