

Rational Drug Therapy An Alternative Approach

The paper Rational Drug Therapy by Mathur *et al.*(1) made interesting reading. The authors have given very useful suggestions for curbing the problem of irrational drug use. However, most of these suggestions are based on the 'policing' approach which, we are afraid, may not succeed in country like ours. Unfortunately, our legal system leaves a lot of loop holes (albiet in good faith) which are exploited to no end. In our opinion, an alternative effective solution lies in generating the awareness amongst prescribers so that they can make rational choices while prescribing a drug. We should not forget that irrationally formulated or priced drugs thrive by the actions of an intermediary - the prescriber, who willingly or unwillingly plays into the hands of drug companies. If we have conscientious prescribers, no amount of advertising can succeed in promoting irrationality.

Educating the prescriber is another issue. While conferences and workshops do provide a means of spreading the message of Rational Drug Use (RDU), the effect is rather limited because of the simple reason that most of the doctors already have fixed ideas and attitudes regarding drug prescription. Internship is a period, which provides us

with a susceptible population having a 'virgin' mind and any intervention is bound to be highly effective during this period.

We have organized a few workshops on Rational Drug Use for interns by involving clinical departments so that right from the beginning, young doctors develop a positive attitude towards RDU. To evaluate the efficacy of these workshops, we divided a group of 40 interns into two. One group was covered by the workshop while the other served as control. It was observed that the control group had negative attitudes towards RDU after 3 months of exposure to Medical representatives while the test group maintained significant positive attitudes. The detailed results and methodology will be reported later. This exercise suggests that every medical college should include RDU in the formal curriculum during MBBS course as well as during intership training. Only by 'catching them young', we will be able to counter the promotional strategies of drug companies and develop positive attitudes of the prescriber, thus preventing him from becoming a salesman of the pharmaceutical industry..

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REFERENCE

1. Mathur GP, Kushwaha KP, Mathur S. Rational drug therapy: Reasons for failure and suggestions for its implementation. *Indian Pediatr* 1993, 30: 815-818.