

PP9:

Availability, price and affordability of essential medicines for selected non communicable diseases in Sri Lanka.

Dabare P.R.L¹, Wanigatunge C.A², Beneragama B.V.S.H³

¹B.Pharm Program, Department of Allied Health Sciences, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

²Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

³Family Health Bureau, Ministry of Health and Indigenous Medicines, Sri Lanka

Access to medicines is a universal human right. Availability and affordability are preconditions for the universal access. The objective was to investigate the availability and affordability of essential medicines (EMs) prescribed to treat cardiovascular diseases, asthma and diabetes in public and private health sectors in Sri Lanka.

Methodology was based on 2nd edition of WHO/HAI manual. Data were collected from a representative sample of public hospital's OPD pharmacies, Rajya Osusalas (RO) and private pharmacies (PP). Availability and prices of EMs in Lowest Priced Generic (LPG) and Originator Brand (OB) were collected. Percentage availability, median prices and median price ratio to the International Reference Price (IRP) were calculated. Affordability was determined using the daily income of the lowest-paid unskilled government worker.

RO had the highest (>80%) availability of LPG. Price of 62% of selected medicines (21) was less than 10 Rupees. There was no significant difference of prices between RO and PP. There was a significant difference in prices among LPG and OB. The price of seven LPGs was less than that of IRP. The OB price for 7 medicines was > 5 times that of LPG.

For most of the population, the generic medicine prices were affordable. 48% of drugs required < the daily wage to purchase one LPG for a month.

The EMs for selected diseases are readily available in both public and private health sectors. The medicines are affordable to the lowest income earners in the community.