

Explanatory Findings of Prescribing Biosimilar Medicines in Oncology Care Settings of Pakistan

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SUMMARY. The present study was conducted to assess the pharmacists' knowledge and attitude of biosimilar medicines (BSMs) used in oncology care settings of Pakistan using a 15-items survey form. Different tertiary care hospitals and clinics, community pharmacies and academic settings in Karachi were approached for the study. The mean cumulative knowledge score of respondents was 7.83 (SD: 1.19, Range: 0-10). The respondents opined that the BSMs offer significant cost savings to the healthcare system (79.9%, [95% CI 78-81.8]), and around 85% believed that BSMs encourage competition among companies which contributes to the reduction of prices (84.93%, [95% CI 82.83-87.03]). Unexpected adverse effects among patients (66.5%, [95% CI 64.1-68.9]) was the majorly observed barrier of using BSMs as perceived by the respondents. The findings elucidate an affirmative approach of pharmacists and they were enthusiastic for gaining more insight to eliminate potential misconceptions and integrate BSMs into routine clinical practice.

RESUMEN. El presente estudio se realizó para evaluar el conocimiento y la actitud de los farmacéuticos sobre los medicamentos biosimilares (BSM) utilizados en entornos de atención oncológica de Pakistán mediante un formulario de encuesta de 15 ítems. Se abordaron diferentes hospitales y clínicas de atención terciaria, farmacias comunitarias y entornos académicos en Karachi para el estudio. El puntaje promedio de conocimiento acumulado de los encuestados fue de 7.83 (SD: 1.19, Rango: 0-10). Nuestros encuestados opinaron que los BSM ofrecen importantes ahorros de costos al sistema de salud (79.9%, [CI 95% 78-81.8]), y alrededor del 85% cree que los BSM fomentan la competencia entre las empresas que contribuyen a la reducción de precios (84.93%, [CI 95% 82.83-87.03]). Los efectos adversos inesperados entre los pacientes (66,5%, [CI 95% 64,1-68,9]) fueron la principal barrera del uso de BSM según la percepción de los encuestados. Los hallazgos aclaran un enfoque afirmativo de los farmacéuticos y estaban entusiasmados por obtener más información para eliminar posibles conceptos erróneos e integrar los BSM en la práctica clínica habitual.

KEY WORDS: biosimilar medicines, oncology, Pakistan, pharmacists.

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