

RESEARCH NEWS

HIV patients will accept generic treatments

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) patients in high-income countries are likely to accept the introduction of generic antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, according to a study carried out by researchers in Ireland [1].

Between July and August 2015, a survey of 66 patients was carried out in one-to-one interviews at St James Hospital, Dublin, Ireland. Descriptive and univariate analysis revealed information on cohort demographics, knowledge of generic medicine and facilitators of generics substitution.

The analysis identified an ethnically diverse group of patients that broadly reflected the overall diversity of those attending the clinic. 94% of patients were taking ARVs, of whom 95% were taking a once-daily regimen of three pills and 50% were on a single-tablet regimen. 35% were prescribed medicines, other than ARVs. Only 21% of the patients had ever discussed generic medicines with a healthcare professional.

The patients' view of generics

Only patients familiar with generic medicines were asked to complete questions related to their attitude on these products. The majority of these patients agreed that generic medicines contained the same drug as the branded alternative and are as safe and effective. 71% said that they would have no concerns over the introduction of generic ARVs. However, 61% of those interviewed said that an increase in frequency of administration would affect their acceptance

of generic medications, and 53% would be concerned over an increase in pill burden. Results also showed that patients would be more willing to accept substitution introduced by their hospital doctor rather than their pharmacist.

The authors believe that the results show that generics substitution would be acceptable to the majority of patients in Ireland. Targeted education programmes should be implemented to ease transition and reduce misconceptions about generic ARVs. Barriers to substitution are likely to be encountered with increased dosing regime or pill burden. However, if advised by their hospital doctor, patients would be more likely to accept generic medications. They also state that the savings made through administration of generic ARVs can be reinvested into HIV services.

A summary of the attitude of healthcare professionals towards the introduction of generic ARVs is presented in an earlier article in *GaBI Journal* [2].

References

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2. Healthcare professionals will accept generic HIV treatments. *Generics and Biosimilars Initiative Journal (GaBI Journal)*. 2017;6(3):148. doi:10.5639/gabij.2017.0603.029

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