EFFECTIVENESS OF INHALER TECHNIQUE BY PATIENTS IN A HOSPITAL IN MALDIVES

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Abstract.

The use of aerosol medication in respiratory diseases has advantages over parenteral and oral routes and is the most common form of medication other than pills. Inhaled medication is known to have faster onset with fewer side effects. Proper technique is essential for the drug to be delivered effectively. Surveys have repeatedly shown that inhaler technique among clients is suboptimal.

The study was conducted after permission was obtained from the relevant authorities and the patients. All the patients’ who were admitted during the time the study was conducted as well as those who visited the outpatient department was included in the study. A structured questionnaire was filled to get the demographic and information on the patients’ knowledge on inhaler usage. A checklist was used to observe the technique of inhaler use. After the initial observation patients were given health education on the proper inhaler technique and re-assessed and findings recorded.

There were 35 patients of whom 65.7% were females. Fourteen out of the total were 46 years old or above. The number of patients with asthma was 23 and the rest (12) had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Seventeen of the patients stated that they used their inhaler when they felt uncomfortable. The study showed that the knowledge of the patients was not optimal and patients’ perception of the skill does not represent their actual skill. The overall skill of the patients was also very poor. Sixteen of the patients stated that they are able to use their inhaler properly at all times. However, only six patients were able to
demonstrate all the steps correctly. Nine patients made at least one error and the other twenty committed two or more errors. Overall it could be concluded that the patients’ inhaler technique was ineffective. It is recommended that patients using inhalers, especially Metered Dose Inhaler (MDI) should be periodically evaluated, errors corrected and proper technique emphasized.