

IMPRECISE DRUG PRICING FOR METFORMIN IN NEPALESE MARKET

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OBJECTIVE

This pharmacoeconomic study is designed to obtain the image of price variability metformin (anti-diabetic drugs) available in the Nepalese pharmacies.

INTRODUCTION

Nepal pursues a cutthroat market structure where both home and foreign manufacturers compete. There is the persistence of a wide range of variation of the drugs price in Nepalese market. Former studies had revealed vagueness in drug pricing. Here, a very few studies accomplished disclose such price variations in the open market.^[1]

METHOD

Anti- diabetic drug metformin is available into two strengths in Nepal –500mg and 850mg tablets. Metformin 500mg tablets found to have twenty different brands whereas the Metformin 850mg tablet has only four brands. The drug price with their available brands included in the study were obtained from two hospitals (Bir Hospital Pharmacy and Nidan Hospital Pharmacy) and as well as from their territories (retail) pharmacies. Since there are numerous brands available for a particular generic drug, Excel was used to enter all the available brands of drugs along with their market retail price. Then their mean, median and quartiles were calculated.^[2] The minimum market retail price and the maximum market retail price were also considered. The percentage price variation for both dosage forms was also calculated using the following formula.^[3]

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Price of most expensive brand} - \text{least expensive brand}}{\text{Price of least expensive brand}} \times 100$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A wide variety of cost differences were found in same drug. The minimum market retail price of a metformin 500mg tablet was NRs.1.04 and maximum price was NRs.4.48. Then, resulted mean was NRs.2.182, median NRs.2 and quartiles NRs.2.5. The percentage price variability of tablet metformin 500mg was 330.769%. For metformin 850mg, the minimum market retail price was NRs.1.75 whereas maximum market retail price was NRs.5.20. The estimated mean were NRs.3.3625, median NRs.3.25 and quartiles NRs.4.3. The percentage price variability of metformin 850mg tablet was 197.142 %.

CONCLUSION

It has been observed that price variation was higher among metformin tablets and this price variation might result in larger difference in cost of management of diabetic conditions, if expensive brands were prescribed.

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