



Conceptual framework for effective stakeholder engagement for pharmacovigilance in a resource limited setting



Putting patients at the heart of health interventions and gainfully engaging different stakeholders that make up the society will go a long way in ensuring sustainable health for the entire population.¹ Medicine use is associated with possible side effects as exemplified in the Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC) or Package Inserts (PI) of products, specifically the adverse events (AEs) or adverse drug reactions (ADRs) that may occur during the period a patient is taking a particular medicine for a diagnosed ailment or disease.

This paper presents a conceptual framework showing the interactions between different stakeholders who have a role to play in ensuring that pharmacovigilance is entrenched in resource-limited countries, such as Namibia. The framework put patients at the heart of any programme or activities that can aid in achieving Health for All, of which pharmacovigilance is a significant component.² Stakeholder analysis and engagement have been identified by Adenuga et al. as a necessary input to achieve the goals pharmacovigilance in low- and middle-income countries.³ It is important to note that buy-in from policy makers and patients is needed to achieve sustained positive treatment outcomes, thus, the need to involve patients

in their therapy and create consciousness about reporting whatever adverse reactions occur during and after finishing administration of medicines.

A multi-compartment approach is proposed to achieve an enhanced and robust pharmacovigilance system (see Fig. 1). Stakeholders such as mobile technology providers can assist in coming up with mobile platforms for on-line reporting and dissemination of information from and to patients. This has been explored in different settings with proven evidences of better patient management and improved communication between healthcare workers (HCW) and patients. To achieve the goals presumed in the framework, multilevel engagements of different stakeholders by the Therapeutic Information and Pharmacovigilance Centre (TIPC), an arm of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), is envisaged. Clearly divided and identified roles of the stakeholders will help in creating a focussed system of engagement and allows each individual organisation to take ownership of their sector with the end result of better patient management and overall, improved therapeutic outcomes.

A recent study highlighted that communication between TIPC and other stakeholders is one of the challenges facing effective implementation of

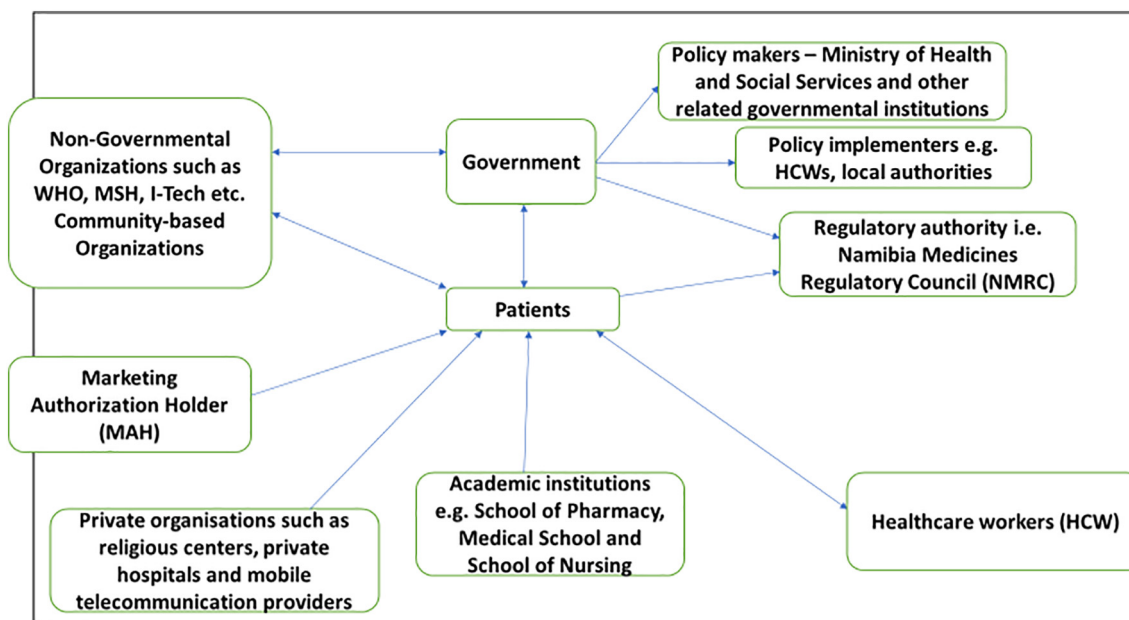


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework for pharmacovigilance in Namibia.

pharmacovigilance in Namibia⁴; it is envisaged that creation of avenues and communication links between different stakeholders within the Namibian health system can go a long way to ensure effective pharmacovigilance, thus, contribute to adverse drugs reactions (ADR) reporting in the long run.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, different therapies have been advanced as a cure for the infection, though, varying impacts have been achieved with drugs such as hydroxychloroquine, dexamethasone, and ivermectin.⁵ With no proven effectiveness of these drugs in treating or managing COVID-19 infections and the commotion caused within the health systems and populations in Southern Africa, it is likely that adverse effects might occur and such may be missed or overlooked. In situations such as this, it is necessary for health systems to be holistic in its focus on patient management, as depicted for pharmacovigilance in this framework.

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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