

Need to safeguard insensible wastage of Ayurvedic medicines

Dear Editor,

On keen observation in the routine clinical practices, it introduce that there are diverse sources of drug wastage from the manufacturer to consumer's level. The community usually thinks that the drugs are available abundantly in the market and thus is not challenging, but that is not true. In the era of progressive urbanization, deforestation and lesser interest in the cultivation of medicinal plants are the matter of apprehension which leads to limited resources. Furthermore, drug wastage ultimately affects the economy of the nation. Although the complete reduction the total drug wastage is not an easy task, but awareness regarding insensible wastage can help for inculcating the habit of sensible use of medicines. For this purpose, awareness regarding importance of herbs, its limited resources can help to stop insensible drug wastage and to save the drug, for the future use will add value to patient care and reduce burden of health care system.

The wastage of drugs is seen at a different level, including the physician, pharmacist, patient, health-care providers and public, in the various aspects.^[1] As the physician is the most important and responsible part of the *Chikitsa Chatushpada* (quadruple of therapeutics)^[2] mentioned in ancient classics (Charaka), it is the prime responsibility of the physician to arrive at the proper diagnosis, prescribe most suitable medicines, avoid unnecessary medication (polymedication), and also to include nonpharmacological intervention like lifestyle modification where ever required.^[3] This will be possible when the clinician develops diagnostic skills to identify the complaint severity, seriousness and associated complaints and then manage accordingly. Furthermore, he must also make aware the concerned staff about the importance of medicines and guide them to minimize the wastage of medicines. The nonjudicious prescription to the patients, frequent repetition of the medicine without evaluating and assessing the effect of drug and same repetition results in remarkable wastage of drug.

Further frequent second opinion and no use or single use of prior prescriptions by the patients play a major role in the wastage of medicine. The impatience, palatasility, willingness to take specific preparation of medicine, and trying to intake polymedicine at a time are also the cause of the shortage of drugs & wastage of medicine, which are to be avoided. Eagerness to achieve early health leads to multiple consultations and over use of drug intake at a the lead to the wastage of drugs.^[4]

The drug distribution and dosing of drugs are managed by nurse, pharmacist, and attendant. Without enquiring about the remaining unused medicines, inappropriate distribution

of prescribed drugs, improper handling and misbalancing in the stock register create wastage of medicines, expiring of the drugs that ultimately result in the wastage of drugs. Hurrying up in reading the prescriptions and delivering drugs to the patient, issuing excess medicines lead to the wastage of drugs from pharmacist side.^[5] This wastage can be controlled by proper education to concerned persons, who are related to drug handling and shall adhere to the prescription strictly.

The unhygienic storage of prepared drugs may lead to seepage, contamination of medicine with soil, insects, rodents, water or variation in temperature that reduce quality of medicine as well as wastage of drugs. The manufacturing of drugs without judging the requirements in the market also cause wastage of drugs and resources, affect the quality of drugs. Hence, an acceptable guideline for unused medicine is required.

By thorough consultation with team, the insensible drug wastage can be minimized. Primarily, it requires the awareness among physicians, patients, and health-care providers. Encouragement to value the judicious uses of prepared drugs, as well as raw drugs, is needed. Reuse of stored medicines can be possible after checking the sealed packaging, expiry date and batch number, proper storage and transportation and skillful assessment of the is required. The sensible prescription is solicited finally for the protection of prepared Ayurvedic drugs, as well as raw materials. Thus, a positive approach to aware the clinician, pharmacists, nurses, attendants, patients, and their relatives is the need of the hour. All healthcare provider/workers should respect the drugs and their resources by its judicious use. If we initiate this step today, we can save expensive medicines and contribute to healthy tomorrow.

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Conflicts of interest

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