

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION OF STUDY 2

1. Background and rationale of study 2

There are an increasing number of studies whereby simulated client method (SCM) has been used to assess elements of health service, including pharmacy practice (Anderson and Bissell, 2004; Norris, 2002).

In developing countries, drugstore personnel de facto diagnose, dispense medications, and advise the patients in their vast contribution to primary care (Goel, et al., 1996). Gender and SES of the clients have been shown to be factors of inequality in quality of care in hospitals (Aracena, et al., 2005; Sheppard, et al., 2005). Previous studies have provided little insight into the effects of such factors on pharmacist behaviors, which should be rather different from those by physicians.

Client factors in SCM are supposed to be well controlled under the experiment setting. However, most SCM studies did not cover the issue of gender and socioeconomic status (SES) of the simulated clients (SCs). There is a need to document these effects in the SCM studies. A bettering understanding of such effects can improve the design of future SCM resulting in better quality of assessment of pharmacy care.

This study used upper respiratory infections (URI) as a model due to its prevalence in the population (Monto, 2002), and the important role of the drugstore as the first professional care for this condition (Goel, et al., 1996). Practice guidelines for pharmacy care for this problem have also been established (Tietze, 2004). This guidelines also detail appropriate history taking, dispensing of medications and advice giving. Antibiotics are not recommended since most URI have viral origin and taking antibiotics in this case may increase adverse effects and trigger the development of resistant pathogens (Arroll and Kenealy, 2007). There have been previous reports that dispensing practice for this condition was often not up to standard (Chuc, et al., 2002; Tumwikirize, et al., 2004). With this solid guideline, it is feasible to design a SCM to test the effect of aforementioned factors.

2. Objectives of study 2

- 1) To evaluate the quality of health service of community pharmacists based on history taking, advice giving and choice of drug dispensed
- 2) To investigate whether gender and SES appearance of clients presenting with URI influence the practice patterns of community pharmacists