

Abstract

Objectives - To determine types, quantities and costs of unused medications at home including factors affecting them.

Method - Unused medications in 453 households were investigated and drug owners were interviewed by questionnaires. Logistic and multiple regression analysis were carried out to investigate any relationship between background factors and the main reasons for not taking all medications and to test the factors affecting to the number of doses and costs of unused medication.

Setting - Households in Songkla Province, Thailand

Key findings: Unused medication of 995 items with a total cost of 15,297 bahts, most consisted of 11,228 tablets or capsules and 16,494 ml of oral liquid medications were found. The median number of unused medication costs per person and per household were 9 and 9.8 bahts. The cost of anti-infective drugs was found highest followed by gastro-intestinal and respiratory drugs. The most frequency reason for not taking all prescribed medication was the patients' perception that their symptoms or diseases had resolved. It should be noted that 21.1% of medication owners thought that they had received too much of medication quantities and 15.2% of them said that dispensers did not tell them to use all of medications. The unused medication doses were related to higher age group; having chronic disease; receiving medication for continuous usage; and receiving medications from governmental sectors. The costs of unused medication were related to living in urban area and receiving medication for continuous usage.

Conclusion - This study illustrated the money loss and drug owner's reasons of unused medications.

Keywords : cost, unused medication; unused medicine; unwanted medicine, unused medicinal products, drug wastage, wasted drug, wasted medication