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Drug Utilization Review

Background:

One of the most pressing problems facing public health providers and administrators in many countries is ensuring the rational use of drugs. The Conference of Experts on the Rational Use of Drugs, convened by the World Health Organization (WHO) in Nairobi in 1985, defined rational use as follows:

The rational use of drugs requires that patients receive medications appropriate to their clinical needs, in doses that meet their own individual requirements, for an adequate period of time, and at the lowest cost to them and their community.

Hospital formularies help optimize treatment, enhance accessibility to essential drugs and control costs of therapy. The drug formulary can be considered the basis of rational drug use. However, the existence of a rationally derived list of drugs approved for procurement and use in a hospital does not ensure that they are prescribed and used correctly. One mechanism to ensure correct prescribing and use is the drug utilization review (DUR) process.

Definition:

Drug Utilization Review can be defined as:

'Review of a drug usage based on the basis of a previously established and approved usage criteria'.

It may be retrospective, prospective or concurrent but the ultimate goal of such exercise is to promote the rational drug use, by comparing actual drug use to pre-determined standards, DUR can detect inappropriate and/or unnecessarily costly drug therapy. Programs can be designed to monitor individual drugs or drug classes as well as to monitor drug use in specified diseases. When problems are identified, interventions are designed and implemented to improve drug use that can include educational programs, provision of drug information, changes in hospital policies and procedures, and changes in the drug formulary.

Drug Use Criteria:

Drug use criteria are written documents that were carefully constructed with the help of current medical literature regarding a particular drug. It usually consists of following four components:

- **Justification for use**
- **Critical Process Indicator**
- **Adverse Effects**
- **Outcome measure**

Justification for use contains indications, while the critical process indicators routinely describe usual dose range in adult and pediatric population, laboratory parameters to be checked and/or any precautions related to the administration of a particular drug. In the component of adverse effects, parameters or statement regarding measuring of adverse effects were given. Outcome measures usually estimate the beneficial effects or success of the therapy in a particular indication such as resolution of fever as well as chest infiltrate are outcome measure of Amoxicillin/Culavanate (Augmentin) use in a patient with respiratory tract infection.