Non-Medical Prescriber experiences of training and competence to report Adverse Drug Reactions to the Yellow Card Scheme

Justine Howard, Christine Randall and Andrew Thompson
Yellow Card Centre North West, North West Medicines Information Centre, University of Liverpool and Liverpool Health Partners

Background Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) are a significant burden for patients and health systems. Epidemiological data from the UK suggests that ADRs are responsible for significant healthcare utilisation accounting for 6.5% of hospital admissions. The Yellow Card Scheme (YCS) is the cornerstone of pharmacovigilance in the UK and relies on spontaneous reports from members of the public and healthcare professionals, for many this is a professional responsibility.

Aims To explore:
• Non-medical prescribers’ (NMP) confidence in identifying and reporting ADRs;
• NMP prescribing habits and engagement with the YCS;
• NMP desire for future training in the identification and reporting of ADRs.

Methods A questionnaire, developed by members of Liverpool Health Partners Yellow Card Working Group and Yellow Card Centre North West, was distributed via local and regional NMP leads in the North West of England. No restrictions were placed on respondents, beyond the need to be a qualified NMP. The online survey was open from September 5 2016 for 9 weeks. All participants were asked about their profession, qualifications, recent prescribing practice, ADR reporting to the YCS, and desire for future training in identifying and reporting ADRs. Additional questions were dependent upon responses provided.

Results Responses were received from 611 NMPs; 570 were available for analysis.
• The majority of responses came from either nurses (68.1%) or community practitioners (e.g. district nurse, health visitor) (21.1%).
• Most respondents completed their NMP training at institutes located in the North West of England (94.2%).
• Almost 50% of NMPs were prescribing at least once daily.
• 219 of the respondents (38.4%) reported submitting a Yellow Card (YC), with the majority of these individuals submitting five or less YCs; 28 (4.9%) stated they had submitted more than five YCs.
• Profession impacted on the likelihood of submitting a YC, community practitioners having the lowest proportion (23.3%) and pharmacists the highest (96.3%).
• Being professionally qualified for more years and being more confident in identifying ADRs increased reporting rates.
• 75.2% of respondents who answered “no” to “Have you ever reported an adverse drug reaction on a Yellow Card?” gave “I have never seen an Adverse Drug Reaction” as their reason.
• Almost 85% of respondents said that they would value additional support/training in ADR detection and reporting.

Conclusions
• NMPs have an important role in drug safety and need to be encouraged to engage with the YCS.
• Training appears to give NMPs confidence to identify ADRs, but there seems to be a gap in actually identifying ADRs as most reported that they had never seen an ADR.
• Strategies for improving the translation of theoretical knowledge into practical skills in identifying ADRs, and subsequently reporting them, will be important.
• Training is critical in improving ADR reporting in prescribers, and is known to be a positive predictor for future reporting. Minor modification of the current training courses to emphasise the importance of ADRs will be important in ensuring that future NMPs fully engage with spontaneous reporting systems such as the YCS.