

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To

The Managing Editor  
Pakistan Pediatric Journal  
Lahore

### Minimize Medication and Prescription Errors in Pediatric Practice: Ensure Well-being of the Children.

Drug administration is a common therapeutic modality for treating patients.<sup>1</sup> But drugs used irrationally cause devastating effects. These increase medication errors, adverse events, drug-drug interaction, prolonged hospital stays, increased care costs, morbidity, and mortality.<sup>1,2</sup>

“Medication errors” (MEs) are defined as any avoidable event in prescribing, transcribing, dispensing, administering, or monitoring.<sup>3-5</sup> MEs may happen at diagnosis and/or any stage in therapeutic course.<sup>3,6</sup>

More than 500,000 deaths are estimated to occur due to medication errors yearly in Pakistan; deaths might be more as most medication errors are not reported due to fear.<sup>7</sup> MEs occur more in children than in adults and elderly. One of the main ME is prescription-error.<sup>8</sup> Around 70% of MEs are prescription-errors.<sup>9</sup>

The prescription errors are due to poor selection, wrong choice, inadequate dosage, inappropriate administration route, inapt frequency/duration of drugs, illegible handwriting, incorrect spelling, inadequate knowledge, gap in communication, improper transcribing, and overlooking clinical condition.<sup>8,9</sup>

Children are vulnerable to MEs. MEs harm three times more to children because of small body mass requiring dosage calculation on basis of weight, height, age, and clinical condition and specified formulations are needed for treating children. Continuous monitoring is needed for drugs with narrow therapeutic range. This complex process increases the likelihood of medication and prescription errors.<sup>2,5</sup>

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Wide variation in occurrence of prescription errors (3-20%) or drug-related issues (around 50%) in children<sup>10-12</sup> The legitimate check and balance on prescription process in Pakistan is not upto mark; one of the major reasons leading to poor prescribing practices.<sup>9</sup> The knowledge and understanding of medication and prescription errors is critical for quality care of children.<sup>13</sup> Clinicians, nurses, and pharmacist must be trained in prescription writing process. Students should be educated on how to write a proper prescription for patient. This likely ensures provision of quality safe care to children and their well-being.

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