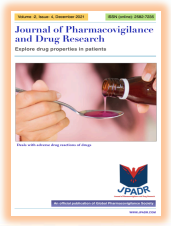
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EDITORIAL ARTICLE

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Impact of National pharmacovigilance week: A masterstroke by IPC-PvPI

Shiva Murthy Nanjundappa [a,] *, Chinmaya Mahapatra [b]

[a] Associate Professor, Pharmacology Department, Dr. Chandramma Dayananda Sagar Institute of Medical Education and Research (CDSIMER), Devarakaggalahalli, Harohalli, Ramanagara District, Karnataka, India

[b] Pharmacovigilance Associate, Department of Pharmacology, MKCG Medical College, Berhampur, Odisha.

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Introduction

National Pharmacovigilance Week (NPW) is being celebrated every year in India in September. World Health Organization (WHO) Collaboration Center, IPC celebrates this week with pride for patient safety. Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) celebrated this national Pharmacovigilance week all over India the year 2021 from 17th-23rd September through an official notification. Around 395 ADR Monitoring Centers across the country celebrated this occasion with the theme "Pharmacovigilance: A step towards Patient Safety". NPW will go a long way in reaching the common masses about the importance of reporting Adverse Drug reactions (IPC, 2021).

Brief History of PvPI

Pharmacovigilance activities such as identification, assessment, and monitoring of adverse drug reactions (ADRs) were initiated in India in 1986 under the supervision of DCGI (drug controller general of India). In 1998, India was included under World Health Organization (WHO) Programme as a part of International Drug Monitoring activities steered by WHO. The response then was not so favorable. To improve the pharmacovigilance activities in India, the Government of India launched the NPPV (National Programme of Pharmacovigilance) in 2005. This program was renamed in 2010, as the PvPI (Pharmacovigilance Programme of India). Later, the national coordination center from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS, New Delhi) was shifted to the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) in Ghaziabad to bring more effective pharmacovigilance systems in India. The main objective of PvPI remained to identify the risks related to medications and safeguard the health of the Indian population (Kalaiselvan *et al*., 2019).

Current Status

Considering the need for indigenous data for policy decisions, the PVPI successfully established 395 Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring centers (AMC) across the country. IPC continued to intensify the pharmacovigilance activities in India by upgrading the capacity building and initiating training activities to sensitize the stakeholders. All the programs were directed to hospitals, individuals, and civil society and encouraged them to participate in PVPI activities. Currently, IPC functions as the National Coordination Centre and has been striving hard in collaboration with national and international stakeholders, ensuring patient safety by monitoring ADRs. In recognition of the strengths and progressive journey of PVPI, World Health Organization (WHO) in 2017 bestowed IPC as a WHO-Collaborating Centre for Pharmacovigilance in Public Health Programmes and Regulatory Services. As a result of these initiatives, India achieved the worldwide 9th

* Corresponding Author
Shiva Murthy Nanjundappa
E-mail: shivuindia@gmail.com
Contact: +918884328275

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rank in reporting of ICSRs to WHO-UMC (WHO-Uppsala Monitoring Center) (IPC, 2021).

Healthcare professionals are considered the backbone of the healthcare system. They contribute to patient safety by reporting ADRs. Hence, IPC initiated this "Pharmacovigilance week" on the occasion of "World Patient safety day" to make the public and healthcare professionals aware of the importance of ADR reporting to improve patient safety. IPC encouraged different organizations such as academic institutions, hospitals, pharmaceutical industries, state pharmacy councils, pharmacy professional organizations, and all healthcare professionals to conduct activities that promote and advocate reporting of adverse drug reactions across the country. IPC advocated promotional campaigns connecting to media and most notably interaction with patients and the public as the key ways in which the best use of "Pharmacovigilance week Celebration" can be made in the interest of patient safety (IPC, 2021).

In addition to the above, IPC intended to create awareness and educate the public and other healthcare professionals about the importance of Pharmacovigilance and to sensitize the general public about the role of healthcare professionals in carrying out Pharmacovigilance related activities. It was also to create occasions to recognize and honor the Healthcare professionals like physicians, nurses, pharmacists, students, academicians in reporting adverse drug reactions as they are an integral part of the healthcare system and drug safety (IPC, 2021).

Action plan of NCC-PvPI

The Campaign was initiated by circulating posters, stickers, banners, hoardings, email messages, SMS, using social networking groups such as Whatsapp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and pamphlets, brochures, PowerPoint presentations, articles for magazines, Advocacy letters to various authorities, associations, consumer organizations, health groups on the occasion of the National Pharmacovigilance Week. IPC also provided financial support for conducting these activities at each AMC level (IPC, 2021).

Activities suggested

For common public

To carry out Community level Sensitization or Awareness measures, regarding the safe use of medicines, reporting suspected ADR, and tools to report by ADR Monitoring Centres.

Professional organizations and institutions

To arrange an Educational or Training program including poster competition, quiz, essay writing, and fun games for students and academicians to sensitize the budding professional's young leaders about the importance of pharmacovigilance. Advised to give a certificate of appreciation from the institution to the participants.

Students and fellow health professionals

To take a picture of a sensitizing program at the community level, and share it on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.

Execution of NPW programs

PVPI informed all the AMCs to submit the programs designed locally at each center. In addition, published NCC-PVPI's program and list of competitions and their rules of participation. They included Essay competition, e-Poster competition, and Video-Animation movie competition and same were conducted at the national level. Informed participants to submit their entries to IPC from all over the country. This fueled the energy to all professionals associated with IPC and energized all to participate at national level activities and also conduct the programs at the institutional level at all the centers throughout. IPC and all the centers conducted the activities as per the schedule submitted by them. IPC announced the results of the competitions held and recognized the talents of the participants. Similarly, centers also conducted the activities and submitted the report IPC in the format supplied to them (IPC, 2021).

Results

Through NPW activities, NCC-IPC reached out to all the stakeholders all over the country. All the centers conducted programs and raised awareness at root levels. Various newspaper publications were generated in different languages. This also created a tsunami of awareness waves on NCC-IPC-related pharmacovigilance activities in India. This is exemplified by the astonishing search results on Google. Surprisingly on Google search with the term "National Pharmacovigilance Week 2021 India", a total of 12,20,000 results were obtained. Among these, news articles were 1780 as on 25th October 2021 at 3.35 pm. At least 300-500 participants were involved through each AMC and estimated to have trained/sensitized at least 1,18,500 to 2,00,000 persons on identification and reporting of ADRs. In addition, pharmacovigilance engagement activities turned into more appealing/enjoyable activities by conducting competitions like pencil art/painting, reflective writing/creative writing, video-animation movie-making, quizzes, writing songs/poems, etc. Through these activities, pharmacovigilance awareness week turned out to be a pleasing and memorable event for many young minds. Hope this will yield better results in accepting the IPC's pharmacovigilance activities.

Conclusions

The National Pharmacovigilance Week initiative will play a major role in raising awareness about activities conducted by National Coordination Center-Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission on yearly basis. The benefits of such initiatives will go beyond estimation. Through this initiative, reporting of ADRs is expected to improve and

will add momentum in raising the world ranking of India at the WHO level. Being a country with a 1.39 billion population, India can play a major role in the identification of unknown risks of drugs and help in the identification of signals and contribute to better health care worldwide.

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