

CHAPTER I

1. Introduction

The rational prescription of drugs, especially antibiotics, an important aspect in the concept of the rational use of drugs, is the subject of this essay. The main issue in this essay is how prescribing practices of the prescribers of Bavi District Hospital (BDH) in the northern rural area of Vietnam can be improved. Vietnam faces a scarcity of financial resources to provide health care for its approximately 76 million population(Vietnam Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Evidently, from 1993 to 1997, the national budget for health was about 1% of the GDP; it should be 5 % to be in accordance with WHO recommendations and about 3.2-3.5 % of the total national budget (N.Q.CU.,1999). People in the rural area, who comprise 80 % of the total population, live in poor socio-economic conditions. The diseases profile is dominated by ARI, malaria, diarrhoea, and tuberculosis (Statistical Publishing House, Hanoi 1993); hence promoting rational use of drugs, especially antibiotics, is very essential to the health care system.

In 1986 Vietnam instituted a new economic and political reform, “Doi moi”, which introduced market economy. As a result, many private clinics and private pharmacies were opened in urban as well as rural areas in Vietnam. That influenced the rational use of drugs in the health care system. As in most developing countries, self-medication with antibiotics bought “ over the counter ” in short courses is common in Vietnam. (N.T.K.Chuc and Tomson G.,1999). The

situation of irrational use of drugs could be seen in all levels of the curative system from commune, district, and provincial to central, in the communities as well as in the hospitals. (Nguyen Tien Dung, 1999).

To overcome the negative situation mentioned above and to gradually achieve rational and safe use of drugs, a comprehensive solution is needed. The Ministry of Health of Vietnam implemented a series of strategies to maintain rational and safe use of drugs, especially antibiotics. For example, a national advisory committee on using antibiotics, and drugs and hospital therapeutic committees and drug informational centers were set up.

Bavi District Hospital is in a rural area in the north of Vietnam where irrational use of drugs, especially antibiotics, is a problem. There were two pilot studies about use of antibiotics, financially supported by a SAREC planning grant, which have been carried out in Bavi District . One of these studied a population of 200 children 1-5 years of age and showed that 82% of the children had at least one symptom of mild upper respiratory infection during the 4 weeks preceding the study and 91% had been treated with antibiotics. Short courses were frequent. When deciding which antibiotic to use, 68% of caretakers consulted the pharmacy. The other study found that 84 % of the children who had received antibiotic prescription had a non- bacterial infection. No study has been carried out so far involving BDH to measure the extent irrational use of antibiotics and the consequences of such use as well as how to improve rational use of antibiotics. This study purposes improving prescriber's rational use of antibiotics through

face-to-face education and implementation of treatment guidelines in Ba vi District Hospital.

The second chapter of this study deals with the consequences of physician's irrational prescribing and irrational use of antibiotics in children under five years old with ARI in BDH, the introduction of standard treatment guidelines and supervised implementation of guidelines through face-to-face education. Similarly, this second chapter will go through the analysis of possible reasons for such irrational prescribing and consequences. Several examples of irrational prescribing have been cited for developing the argument. Possible intervention strategies for improving use of drugs have also been discussed in this chapter. Finally, the second chapter provides brief information on the concept of each approach with their advantages and disadvantages.

The third chapter of this study is a proposal that deals with the background information and rationale of the study. This is an experimental pretest protest design study. The study design is diagrammatically represented including the approach and process. The main techniques for measuring current knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) and comparing the KAP after intervention are data collection from the KAP survey of prescribers and analysis encounters before the beginning of the intervention as well as after the end. The format of data collection is given in appendices including another format, which will be used for consolidations of the indicators. One Focus Group Discussion (FGD) also will be conducted with prescribers to explore the possible causes of such irrational

practices by which possible motivation messages for prescribers can be developed. Budgets for study activities have also been discussed in this chapter.

The fourth chapter of this thesis is the data exercise. This part deals with the collection of data from the Bavi District Hospital. The main objective of the data exercise was to develop skill and to get familiar with the real situation during the data collection time. The format used for collection of data is given in the appendices

Chapter five is the presentation part of the thesis examination. This chapter deals with slides that would be used during the thesis presentation. Chapter six is the annotated bibliography. This chapter provides a brief overview of major books/chapters that were consulted frequently during the thesis.

This is the general overview of the study. The expected output would be a model to enhance appropriate drug prescription based on implementation of guidelines and supervision of this implementation. Standard treatment guidelines provide a way of helping prescribers to prescribe rationally to improve rational use of drugs, especially antibiotics. It is also provides the feeling to prescribers that they are maintaining their prescription style in a manner consistent with the current stream of knowledge. This study will be the beginning of a concept of rational drug use in Bavi District, and the researcher will try to cover all facets of rational use of drugs such as prescribing, dispensing and patient use, to improve the drug use pattern in Bavi District.