

## **Primary Care Physicians' Knowledge and Attitude towards Prescribing Medication for Acute Respiratory Infection**

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**Objective:** This study was performed to assess primary care physicians' knowledge and attitude towards prescribing medications for acute respiratory infections (ARIs).

**Setting:** Aseer Region Primary Care Physicians.

**Design:** Cross sectional study.

**Method:** A cross sectional study using a self-administered, questionnaire carried out during March and April 2004, among all primary care physicians.

**Result:** Out of 320, 268 questionnaires were returned (response rate=83.75%). The mean rank of score in knowledge on ARIs was 16 (SD = 2.0) out of 21. More than 80% of respondents have heard about the National Protocol for ARIs (NP-ARIS). One-third has attended a training course on the protocol, while a third did not want to attend such type of training. Of the 153 physicians who had copies of the protocol, 145 read it. However, only 85 physicians of those who read it comply with it. Physicians with experience more than 5 years in primary health care centres attended more training courses on the NP-ARIs (44% vs 20%,  $p = 0.01$ ), had a positive attitude towards it (70% vs 60%,  $p = 0.04$ ). Those who were trained on the protocol, prescribed anti histamines and vitamin c less frequently (38% vs 60%,  $p = 0.04$ ) and (38% vs 61%,  $p = 0.04$ ) respectively.

**Conclusion:** Over-prescribing for acute respiratory infections is a common behaviour among primary care physicians, despite their good knowledge of the health problem.

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