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Do parents know how to safely administer paracetamol products to the children in their care?

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Do parents know how to safely administer paracetamol products to the children in their care?

Abstract

Content and aims: Over-the-counter (OTC) paracetamol products are frequently used as analgesics and antipyretics in children. While paracetamol is a safe medication to use when the directions for administration are followed, intentional and unintentional overdoses can cause poor health outcomes, in children. This study investigated parents' knowledge and practices around the safe administration of OTC paracetamol products to children.

Methods: Parents (≥ 18 years of age) who had previously purchased Children's Panadol™ were asked to complete a 20-item online survey which assessed their knowledge about the ingredients, recommended daily dosage and potential adverse effects associated with giving children too much paracetamol. The survey was distributed via SurveyMonkey to a convenience sample accessed through Facebook and three Australian online parenting forums, during September and October 2015.

Findings: Responses were received from 174 participants, the majority of whom were female (98.8%), with a mean age of 35.6 years. Approximately a quarter of the respondents (26.4%) did not know the maximum recommended daily dose; over a third (37.4%) did not know that liver toxicity could result from overdose and almost a half of them (46%) did not know how many days in a row that the recommended dose could be safely given.

Innovative contribution to policy, practice and/or research: Gaps in parents' knowledge about the safe administration of OTC paracetamol products leave children susceptible to experiencing adverse drug events. It is therefore suggested that all healthcare practitioners need to take a more active role in educating parents about the safe use of these OTC products.

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Context and Aims

Over-the-counter (OTC) paracetamol products are frequently used as analgesics and antipyretics in children. While paracetamol is a safe medication to use when the directions for administration are followed, intentional and unintentional overdoses can cause poor health outcomes, in children. This study investigated parents' knowledge and practices around the safe administration of OTC paracetamol products to children.

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Innovative contribution

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