

“Physician Shopping”: Internet Purchase of Medication and Problem

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Abstract

With advent internet technology, things become easier. This includes the rapid purchasing of things via internet. The main consideration at present is the sale of medical product via internet. The “physician shopping”, an internet purchase of medication can causes several problems. In this short article, the author briefly summarizes and discusses on this problem via the medical view.

Keywords: Internet, Shopping, Physician, Medication

Introduction

It is no doubt that the information technology is the part of daily life at present. With advent internet technology, things become easier. This includes the rapid purchasing of things via internet. Several products can be sold on internet and internet users can choose, order and purchase those things presented on internet. The main consideration at present is the sale of medical product via internet. The “physician shopping”, an internet purchase of medication can causes several problems. In this short article, the author briefly summarizes and discusses on this problem via the medical view.

“Physician shopping”, is it a problem in medicine?

“Shopping around” might not be a new thing in medicine [1]. In fact, in the past, patients who have low education and live in poor countries usually wander and seek for many physicians to serve their needs. However, with the easily available internet at present, the trend of using internet for seeking medical service and product can be expected. “Physician shopping” via internet becomes a new considerable problem in medicine at present. Focusing on the problem, Lineberry and Bostwick said that “they become consumers able to buy prescription medications,

even controlled substances, from anonymous providers offering no ongoing treatment relationship and taking no responsibility for the drugs dispensed [2]”. A report from West Virginia showed that the physician shopping was more common than visiting physicians. However, few percentage of the physician who detected the problem official report the problem to the corresponding governmental unit. Shaffer and Moss noted that “if the law protected them, 85 percent of all physicians reported they would be likely to report doctor shoppers [3].” Reflecting from the situation in USA, it can expect the more problem in less developed countries where there is no governmental unit corresponding to the problem of illegal and improper drug use.

How to control the problem?

Sale and purchase is within the same process. If there is no purchaser, there will be no saler. How to promote the knowledge to the lay persons not to buy drug from internet is a big challenge. Ivanitskaya et al. studied this situation and found many ones, including ones with medical education, still buy drug via internet. Ivanitskaya et al. suggested that “online health information consumers would benefit from education initiatives that (1) communicate why it can be dangerous to buy medications online and that (2) develop

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their information evaluation skills. This study highlights the importance of regulating rogue Internet pharmacies and curbing the danger they pose to consumers [4].” Internet can be good for medical purpose such as giving information for ones who seek basic self - care information. However, to control of the improper internet use such as inappropriate promotion of drug and up-sale via internet has to be strictly controlled [5].

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