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**The Evolution of Pharmacovigilance in Western Africa**


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**Abstract**

As the examination of the effects of medications on human subject, pharmacovigilance involves the acquisition and evaluation of pharmaco-dynamic and pharmaco-economic data, of drug toxicity, and of any statistically significant differences in standard versus investigational drug efficacy. This information is utilised in assessing serious adverse reactions associated with investigational drugs, prior to dissemination into the population. This data is also invaluable to the evaluation of potentially new standard of care medications. While global standards exist for the implementation of pharmacovigilance, there remain discrepancies between developed and developing nations. These are often associated with the exploitation of indigenous people in the drug development process and subsequent distribution of lower quality medications following sub-standard evaluation of investigational drugs. Several factors have been associated with reduced pharmacovigilance within developing nations. These include underfunding and under-recognition, lack of political will, and consequent inappropriately funded institutions designated for the analysis of drug effectiveness, drug toxicity and adverse drug reactions. Further factors are the reduced access to acceptable investigational drug assessment tools, and diminished awareness regarding the long-term effects of poor pharmacovigilance practices. In our study we examine the factors related to sub-standard pharmacovigilance in Western Africa, with focus on the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Benin. We also provide explorations for the diminished improvement over the past decade despite significant advances in surrounding development nations. Finally we propose practical measures through which pharma may also be improved in these countries and delineate areas which may benefit from future epidemiological research.

**Pharmacovigilance and Human Rights**

To clarify our investigation into pharmacovigilance in Western Africa, we have highlighted specific cases of problems in the development and management of some pharmacovigilance practices.

**Pharmacovigilance and Corruption**

- The incident of counterfeit drugs has been under the spotlight in Africa within the past decade, with the drug being targeted being those providing primary care.

**Conclusion**

Although the current situation of pharmacovigilance in West Africa has undergone some improvements over the last 10 years, much is required for our continent to achieve a standard level of pharmacovigilance practices.

**References**

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