

The development of a teaching tool to identify and prioritise potential causes of adverse drug reactions: The ATTEND DR acronym.

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Objective

To develop a clinical teaching tool to evaluate the causality of adverse drug reactions (ADRs). A tool based on existing algorithms, and augmented by incorporating factors and processes used by experienced clinicians.

Methods

Individual discussions were held between the first author and five practicing clinicians with clinical teaching experience (4 clinical pharmacists and 1 general practitioner) to determine the factors and processes they used to assess the causality of ADRs. These were then added to a list of factors identified from existing causality assessment algorithms. An iterative process was used to develop and refine an acronym to help students identify potential causes of an ADR and prioritise them. Student feedback was sought on valuable aspects of the acronym and how it could be improved.

Results

The order of the letters in the acronym was integral to the students' application, as was having separate identifiers for each individual action. Due to this TRACED (timeline, rechallenge, abnormality, cannot be another cause, evidence, dechallenge/dose) became ATTEND DR (abnormality, taken, timeline, evidence, nothing else?, dose, dechallenge, rechallenge). Students commented that the acronym was "well structured", a "good way to work out ADR considering polypharmacy, lifestyle factors." and was "practice oriented". Comments related to improvement focussed on "more practice questions to get better acquainted with ATTEND DR".

Conclusions

ATTEND DR was well received, understood and successfully applied by students. Students felt better able to identify and prioritise potential causes of ADRs when using this acronym, especially in comparison with the existing algorithms.