

Letter to the Editor

Emphasizing Certain Clinically Significant Food-drug Interactions

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To the Editor

Sir,

A food-drug interaction is a condition in which the food affects the activity of a drug. When drugs and certain foods are taken at the same time, they can produce serious toxicity including death and or therapeutic failure. Unfortunately, the treating physicians as well as dietitians rarely ask patients about their eating habits and patients. If the physician and the dietitian remember the possible food-drug interaction, the adverse effects of many drugs can be avoided. This will indirectly help improve the standard of public health.

Hence, we have to make sure that the physicians and dieticians understand the importance of possible food and drug interaction and use this knowledge for the benefit of patients by properly advising them. To contemplate that, some practicing family physicians of Puducherry were contacted and information about clinically significant food and drug interaction were obtained from them. Based on their suggestion, a literature survey was undertaken for the clinically significant food–drug interaction. The obtained information showed the various interactions between different foods and drugs. For example, absorption of the antibiotic azithromycin is decreased by 43% when taken with food. When monoamine oxidase inhibitor drugs are taken along with food containing tyramine, this may result in hypertensive crisis and death. When statin drugs are taken along with grapefruit juice, it may lead to dangerous effects. However, we have to understand that not all food drug interactions are harmful. There are also cases where the therapeutic efficacy of griseofulvin is significantly enhanced whenit’s taken with fatty meals.

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To conclude, the incidence of food and drug interaction is becoming increasingly common nowadays because of the introduction of many newer drugs and there is less information available about their interaction with food. Much more research is needed for this kind of interaction which can enable our society physicians and dieticians to understand and implement the necessary steps taken.

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