

SPECIAL ARTICLE

Treatment Card: Vital Tool in the Vaccination in Rabies Control Program

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ABSTRACT

A treatment card is vital in any long term follow-up of diseases. Rabies is one of them, treatment card is important to follow-up with the diseased or beneficiary under the national program. Efficient use of this tool requires well trained and motivated health care provider. It is a cost-effective tool hence highly recommended for the rabies control program as the follow-up visits of patients to complete vaccination prophylaxis.

Keywords: Rabies, prevention and control, treatment card, vaccination

INTRODUCTION

The concept of a treatment card or follow-up card is to make the follow-up journey easy for the beneficiary without missing the crucial dates and serves as an important document after the completion of treatment, especially for long term treatment. Treatment cards are the cards which are given to the beneficiaries with certain details, facilitate further treatment. It is different from the medical record as this is a single or two pages card with includes the most important information of ongoing treatment. Importantly due dates of follow up visits. The treatment card is a clear instruction of the ongoing line of treatment to follow and no one can make changes to the treatment card except the treating consultant. Whereas in medical records all the details of patients are noted along with history, diagnosis, investigations, results, treatment. Often it is a bunch of pages or in book form.

WHY THIS TOOL IS NEEDED IN THE MEDICAL FIELD?

In the medical field, some services or procedures or treatments need repeated follow-ups. These required a regular interval of follow-up. Sometimes the exact date of visit is of utmost priority for successful treatment outcome. So, to make the beneficiary remember and visit the facility on these crucial dates, it is the easiest way, as the due dates are calculated and written by the trained person in the cards.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Immunization cards are the first-ever type of treatment card as the mother has to just refer to it and come back for the next vaccination of the child. It serves as an important key tool for the success of the program across the country as it not only serves as a follow-up card but also enhances awareness among the beneficiary.^{2,3} Then several other programs have used this type of card as a tool for the implementation of the program. RNTCP (Recently NTEP) is one program that utilized this strategy in the most efficient way for observation of patients throughout the treatment. Treatment cards are one of the most important tools for the success of programs and serve as an important document for monitoring of the patient by DOT provider and monitoring of program by the program manager.^{4, 5}

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WHY IN RABIES CONTROL PROGRAM?

As it is a well-known fact that Rabies is preventable yet fatal diseases. So prevention of rabies is of great priority and which can be done by the Anti Rabies Vaccine and Anti Rabies Serum. As the anti-rabies serum is given on the first day of the visit if required but animal bite victim has to follow up for almost 1 month in 4 or 5 visits for Anti rabies Vaccine to complete the prophylaxis and get protected against the deadly virus.⁶ It is challenging for patients to remember the dates and visit the health facility for the follow-up vaccination. Hence treatment card can be a beneficial tool in this type of case scenario so that patient can complete prophylaxis and get protection against rabies. There are many advantages and disadvantages to the various levels as described below.

ADVANTAGE TO PATIENT

1. Easy to use by anyone.
2. When patient visits to facility for vaccination other than the parent facility and show the card to the service provider, it gives a clear view of the previous doses, route of administration and brand of the anti-rabies vaccine etc.
3. Can serve as an important document for vaccination for future exposure.

ADVANTAGES TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

1. Prevent duplication of line listing of patients which has implications on vaccine demand. Hence, the vaccine demand can be calculated accurately, ARV stock out can be curtailed.
2. The health care provider has a prior intimation about follow-up patients and can plan accordingly.
3. If a patient from another facility visits with a treatment card it is easy for the service provider to understand the modality like route, category, due date, and brand of the treatment and can accordingly so that patient should not suffer.
4. Create confidence and better understanding among health workers.

ADVANTAGES TO THE COMMUNITY

1. This is a small, essential, beneficial tool, which if used properly prevents untimely and preventable deaths attributed to improper vaccination of dog bite cases.
2. It boosts the confidence and builds repo between the beneficiary and service provider as well maintain.
3. Generates awareness in the community.

ADVANTAGES TO THE HEALTH SYSTEM:

1. Cost-effective tool for better implementation of the program.
2. Can be used to decrease stock out of vaccine, as there is pan country shortage of Anti rabies vaccine availability.
3. Can be used as IEC material.
4. Monitoring of program.

DISADVANTAGE

1. Need training of service provider to fill the card correctly and completely.
2. Motivation to the service provider to fill the card for every new patient and complete card in subsequent visits.
3. The motivation for the patients to carry the card in every visit.
4. Required continuous monitoring.

RECOMMENDATION

Treatment cards can be an effective tool for the better implementation of the program with long treatments. Although the efficient use of this tool requires well trained and motivated health care provider but it is cost-effective tool hence highly recommended for the rabies control program as the follow-up visits of patient to complete vaccination prophylaxis is spread out for approximately one month.

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