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ABC Analysis of a Medication Inventory

Practical 18 - Clinical pharmacy case practical

Aim

To classify medicine inventory by annual consumption value using a defined ABC policy.

Principle

ABC analysis ranks annual spending, not clinical importance. Thresholds are local management choices; combine value classification with criticality and supply-risk assessment.

Materials and Requirements

- Fictional or approved de-identified case, medicine chart and laboratory record
- Current local policy, relevant product information and clinical guidance
- Pharmaceutical-care and communication worksheet
- Approved method or teaching-data pack and a dated record sheet

Procedure

1. Define the preparation or dataset, study question and method version. Record identities, units and the criteria to be used before examining the outcome.
2. Identify the question, patient-specific information and missing data. Use the supplied fictional record; do not create a prescription or administer a preparation.
3. Check item identity, pack-to-unit conversion, annual quantity and unit acquisition cost.
4. Calculate annual consumption value for each item and sort in descending value.
5. Calculate cumulative value percentages and apply the declared A/B/C cutoffs consistently, retaining boundary decisions.
6. Review stockouts, expiry, essentiality and procurement risk separately before recommending controls.
7. Document the assessment, evidence, proposed action, responsible clinician and follow-up. Separate a student recommendation from an authorised treatment decision.
8. Retain the original observations and calculations. State deviations, missing information and the limits of the conclusion; do not replace measured values with expected results.

Observations and Record

Enter actual measurements or the supplied teaching data. Record the method, material identity, conditions and units.

Problem / evidence	Goal / priority	Proposed action / owner	Monitoring / follow-up
Safety or urgent issue	Define	Escalate appropriately	Specify
Effectiveness / adherence	Define	Discuss with team	Specify
Information gap	State	Obtain evidence	Review

Calculations

- Annual value = annual units consumed x acquisition cost per unit
- Cumulative share (%) = cumulative ranked value / total value x 100

Worked Example

Illustrative annual values are 50,000, 30,000, 15,000 and 5,000 currency units: cumulative shares are 50%, 80%, 95% and 100%. Under an illustrative A-to-80%, B-to-95% policy, the first two are A, third B and fourth C.

Result and Interpretation

- Deliver a ranked inventory with formulas, cutoff policy and a risk-aware control recommendation.

Precautions

- Protect confidentiality and use actual units and timing.
- Check allergy, indication, organ function, interactions and the complete medicine list.
- Urgent clinical findings need timely clinical assessment; teaching notes do not replace care.

Viva Questions and Answers

Does C mean unimportant clinically?

No; a low-spend medicine may be vital.

Why convert pack units?

Costs and quantities must share the same unit basis.

Are ABC cutoffs universal?

They are defined by the organisation policy.

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