A Survey on Self Medication among the General Population in Pondicherry

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Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Although pharmaceuticals have made a main influence to health, a large proportion of the world’s population today are facing problems when consuming and accessing medicines. Healthcare professionals are usually sharing their health decisions with their patients in terms of the availability of medicines and its accessibility. Accordingly, patients are being more involved in taking actions either with or without direct healthcare professional guidance, seeking for other facilities to obtain medicines or tend to self-care. Self medication is becoming common in our routine life. This is actually an unhealthy and risky practices. Present study was done to determine the survey on self medication among the general population. A cross sectional study was conducted among the general population of Pondicherry. 111 persons took part in this cross sectional study. Data is analysed using suitable statistical methods. Among 111 persons participated in the study the most common reason to take self medication is in case of minor illness and the sources of information about the drug is from the previous prescription and the drugs they get from medical shop. Only 28.4 % visits the qualified medical practioner in case of illness and mostly they have taken medicines for cough, cold, sore throat and followed by that they have taken medications for headache. Out of 111 persons most of them have taken is analgesics followed by allergy medications. The general population has taken the self medication which is a wrong practice.
1. INTRODUCTION

According to William Osler, a great feature which differentiates man from animals is the wish to take medicine. Self-medication includes the use of medicinal crops by the individuals to treat self-recognized disorders or symptoms, or the alternating or nonstop use of a medication agreed by a physician for chronic or recurring diseases or symptoms [1,2]. Self-medication includes obtaining medicines without a medicine, resubmitting old preparations to purchase medicines, sharing medicines with relatives or members of one’s social circle or using leftover medicines stored at home [3]. Self-medication practices cannot be considered as entirely harmless. Drugs classified as “over the counter” can be purchased without prescription and many a times might [4,5].

Self-medication performs were quite high in this study, and these practices were also predominant among the educated people. The physicians and health professionals have to spend some extra time in educating patients regarding the same. Improved knowledge and understanding about self-medication may result in rationale use and thus limit emerging microbial antibiotic resistance issues.

The present studies were conducted at community level in India to measure the greatness of self-medication practices. Studies of such nature will provide useful insight on the reasons for which patients resort to this practice and might help the policy makers and regulatory authorities to streamline the process of drug regulations, updating the list of essential medicines, and safety issues of over the counter drugs [6,7]. With this background, the present study was done to estimate the prevalence of self-medication for allopathic drugs and also to look for association between self-medication and socio demographic characteristics in an urban Puducherry. This study also focused the attitude of people, who follow the practice of self-medication.

2. METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional study on usage of self medication among the general population. Consent was obtained before providing the form. Basic Perfroma containing name, age, gender, educational qualifications were asked. The survey consists of 7 questions related to intake of self medications. Microsoft Word and excel were used for calculating data. A pre designed semi structured questionnaire was used to collect the relevant information pertaining to the study variables. The questionnaires were assessed for their completeness and only the completed questionnaires were considered for the final analysis. The collected data was analysed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) version 11.5. The results obtained were expressed in proportion

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among 111 persons participated in the study the most common reason to take self medication is in case of minor illness and the source of information about the drug is from the previous prescription and the drugs they get from medical shop. Only 28.4 % visits the qualified medical practitioner in case of illness and mostly they have taken medicines for cough, cold, sore throat and followed by that they have taken medications for headache. Out of 111 persons most of them have taken is analgesics followed by allergy medications.

In our study, we found that female students were more interested in taking Self-medication as compared to male students; this may be due to the fact that the female students are more hesitant to go to the hospital or outpatient department for minor illness. Similar findings were there in the study done by Thadani et al. [8].

Out of 111 persons 80.3% have taken self-medication which is supported by the studies done elsewhere reported 76% in Karachi [3]. 94.1% in Slovenia, [9] 76.9% in Bahrain [10]. In our study, most of the persons who took self medication gave the reason that they no need to visit the doctor for minor illness 52.1% easy and convincing (19.7%) confidence on their knowledge about taking medications (17.1%) Similar findings were there in the study done by James et al. [10].

In our study, we found that source of information was previous prescription (44.4%) this may be due to the fact that they had visited the doctor for the same illness previously and do not found it necessary to again visit the doctor for the similar complaints.
Fig. 1. Distribution of age frequency

Fig. 2. Distribution based on Sex

Fig. 3. Distribution based on education
Fig. 4. Distribution based on Self medication

According to you which of the following was the... self medication

116 responses

Fig. 4(a). Pie chart of self medication

If yes then what was the source of drugs used for self medication

116 responses

Fig. 4(b) Source of collecting the drug for self medication
According to you what were the indication for self medication

116 responses

![Pie chart showing the indication of self medication](image)

Fig. 5. Showing the indication of self medication

Whether visited a qualified medical practitioner or not

116 responses

![Pie chart showing survey result for medical practitioner visit](image)

Fig. 6. Pie chart showing survey result for medical practitioner visit

Which of the drugs were used for self medication

90 responses

![Pie chart showing variety of drug for self medication](image)

Fig. 7. Variety of drug for self medication
We also found that major source of the drugs used for Self-medication was medical store; this may be due to ease and convenience, similar results were found in the study done by Klemenc et al. [9]. We found that most of the students took Self-medication was for cold cough and sore throat that may be due to easy spread of infection in the community and the analgesics were the most important drug that has been taken up (53.8) administered. Similar findings were there in study done by Zafar et al. [3] and James et al. [10].

Analgesics were the most common group of drugs used for Self-medication in our study; similar findings were there in the study done by James et al. [10] and Thadani et al. [8].

4. CONCLUSION

The healthcare professionals and others healthcare authorities should work together to increase the awareness of the public about the negative effects of self-medication if used inappropriately and help them to make the right decision related to health problems. In addition, educational intervention programs are needed to educate people on the proper use of non-prescription medicines that are usually taken for treating their minor illnesses. The self medication is mainly due to lack of awareness and knowledge and hence proper knowledge and advice must be made to the public about the disadvantage of taking drugs without a qualified medical practitioner.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents’ written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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