



ASSESS THE PREVALENCE OF SELF-MEDICATION AMONG PEOPLE IN A SELECTED AREA

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ABSTRACT

Self-medication is a worldwide problem and it is common in developing countries like India every day, everywhere, consumers reach for self-care products to help them through their common health problems. The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of self medication. The research approach used in the study was quantitative approach by using cross-sectional research design with 30 samples who matched the inclusion criteria were selected by convenient sampling technique. Data were collected by interview method on one to one basis and analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study shows that , 73.3% of them had the habit of practising self-medication and the most common symptom for the usage of self-medication was found as headache fever, pain and dysmenorrhea with the reason lack of time to visit health care facilities and to seek a doctor's consultation. The study findings concluded that the people are practicing self-medication for the common minor illness,

KEY WORDS: Self-medication, drug dependence, drug abuse, minor illness



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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is a worldwide problem and it is common in developing countries like India. Medicines for self-medication are often called “non-prescription” or “over the counter” [OTC] and are available without a doctor’s prescription through pharmacies. According to WHO, “Self-medication can be defined as the use of drug to treat the self-diagnosed disorders or symptoms or the intermittent or continued use of prescribed drug for chronic recurrent disease or symptoms without prescription”. Everyday, everywhere, consumers reach for self-care products to help them through their common health problems. They do so because it may be easier for them, it may be more cost or time efficient, they may not feel their situation merits making an appointment with a health care professionals, or they may have few or no other options. The challenge and opportunity for governments, health care professionals, and providers of self-medication products, then, is to have a responsible framework in place for self-medication. It is now accepted that self-care in the form of responsible self-medication can be beneficial for patients, health care providers, the pharmaceutical industries and governments. The WHO has also pointed out that responsible self-medication can help prevent and treat ailments that do not require medical consultation and provide a cheaper alternative for treating common illness. However it is also recognized that self-medication must be accompanied appropriate health information. Self-medication is an area where government and health authorities need to ensure that it is done in a responsible manner, ensuring that safe drugs are made available over the counter and consumer is given adequate information about the use of drug and when to consult a doctor. Self-medication and non-doctor prescribing of drugs is common in developing countries. Complementary and alternative medications, especially herbs, are also commonly used.¹ The same study on the prevalence of self-

medication was conducted in the urban area of Puducherry in the year 2014 by Kalaiselvi Selvaraj, S.Ganesh kumar and Archana Ramalingam. It has been noted that among 352 participants 71% of the people were found to have practicing self-medication. The participants in this study used self-medication mainly for fever, headache and spasmodic abdominal symptoms.² Raj Kumar Mehta, Sujatha Sharma (2015) had conducted a descriptive cross-sectional study to assess knowledge, attitude a practice regarding self-medication among medical students. This study reveals that 84% of the students has practiced self-medication.³ Self-medication is associated with risk factors such as misdiagnosis, use of excessive drug dosage, prolonged duration of use, wastage of resources and increase resistance to pathogens. This may lead to further worsening of health condition of an individual. During clinical experience, the investigator has come across many patients who have had the self-medication practice that ended up in worsening their health status. These factors motivated the researcher to do this study among adults practicing self-medication and the most common symptom they possess for practicing it.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The research approach used in the study was quantitative approach by using cross-sectional research design. After obtaining formal permission from authority the study was conducted at Pammal area with 30 samples who matched the inclusion criteria were selected by convenient sampling technique. Explained the study in detail and obtained informed consent from the samples. Data were collected by interview method on one to one basis. Collected the socio demographic variables and identified the people practicing self-medication by using structured questionnaire. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the procedure. Collected data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

Table 1
Frequency and percentage distribution of demographic variables among adults in a selected area.

Demographic Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	31-40 Years	11	36.7
	41-50 Years	19	63.3
Gender	Male	15	50
	Female	15	50
Education	Illiterate	0	0
	Primary education	9	30
	Secondary education	3	10
	Graduate	18	60
Occupation	Heavy worker	6	20
	Moderate worker	13	43.3
	Light worker	7	23.3
	Sedentary worker	4	13.3
Income	Nil	7	23.3
	3000-8000	7	23.3
	8000-15000	7	23.3
	>15000	9	30

Table I shows that out of 30 samples, majority of them 19(63.3%) of them were in the age group of 41-50 years. Both male and female were equally practicing self medication and majority 18(60%) of them were

graduate. Among adults aged between 30-50 years, 73.3% of them had the habit of practising self-medication. out of 73.3%, 40% of them were men and the remaining 33.3% of them were women.

Table II
Frequency and percentage distribution of symptoms treated using self-medication.

SYMPTOMS	Number	Percentage
Headache	7	23.3
Fever	4	13.3
Cough/ cold	2	6.7
Back pain	4	13.3
Stomach pain	2	6.7
Dysmenorrhea	3	10

Table II shows out of 30 samples, 7(23.3%) of them used self-medication for headache, 4(13.3%) of them used for fever and back pain and 3(10%) of them were used for dysmenorrhea.

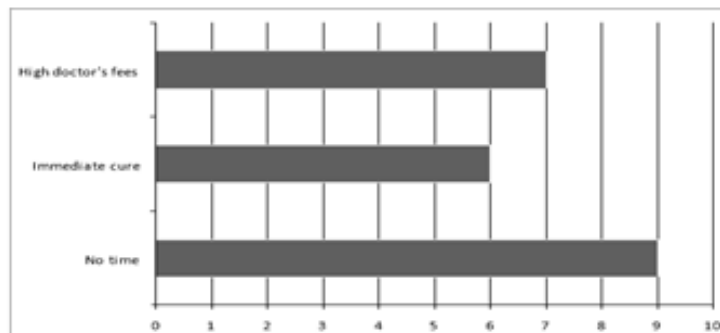


Figure I
Frequency and percentage distribution of reasons for using self-medication.

This figure shows the reasons attributed by the people for using self-medication. Since the illness was minor 9(30%) people use self-medication as they have no time to visit the health care centres. 7(23.3%) people quoted that they could not afford doctor's fees as a reason. 6(20%) people reported that they used self-medication to seek immediate cure.

DISCUSSION

Many people using a substance or any exogenous influence to self for treating physical or psychological ailments. Unaware of the appropriate drugs for the particular illnesses, their doses and adverse effects, the misuse of medications as prescribed by the pharmacist, or a family member, or anyone in general may lead to such people literally playing with their life at their own mercy. Present study reported that 22 (73.3%) samples had the habit of practicing self-medication and out of which 40% of them were male and 33.3% were female. This findings is consistent with the study conducted by Shivani Sharma (2015) and it shows that 76% of the samples were practicing self-medication for treating their minor health illness. It also shows that usage of self-medication is more among men than women.⁴ Another study conducted by Amal. H.Albalawi (2015) who reported that the prevalence of self-medication in a Tabuk city is 82.3% which peaks the rate of self-medication users⁵ and KP. Osemene and A. Lamikanra (2012) estimated the prevalence of self-medication with antibiotics and anti-malarials which reveals that females exhibited higher prevalence of self medication than males.⁶ The most common symptom for the use of self-medication were headache, fever, back pain and dysmenorrhea as shown in table II. This finding is

supported by Sonam Jain(2011) shows that the most common use of self-medication is to treat common cold, headache, body pain. From the above study it is revealed that the public uses self-medication often for headache, fever, common cold and cough.⁷ Another study which was conducted by Dr.Pavan Kumar Kulkarni et.al., had conducted a study on self medication practices among urban slum dwellers in south Indian city and reveals that the commonest reason for self medication was high cost of consultation of private doctors (61.1%).⁸ Abay SM, Amelo W had conducted a study on self medication practices with 414 students and reported that Most drugs for self-medication were obtained from the pharmacy or drug shops; and the most commonly used drugs were Paracetamol and NSAIDs (Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). Common reported illnesses were fever and headache (24.8%) followed by cough and common cold (23.9%).⁹ Vinay Kumar et.al had conducted a study on prevalence and pattern of self-medication practices in an urban area of Delhi and concluded that The prevalence of self-medication in this study was high. Drugs especially antimicrobials were not taken for the proper length of time.¹⁰ SS Keshari et.al had conducted the study to assess the prevalence and pattern of self-medication practices in rural area of Barabanki.and result revealed that Out of 168 respondents, 117 (69.6%) reported self-medication within 1 year of recall period. Most common conditions/symptoms for self-medication in students were fever (72.6%), pain (64.3%) and respiratory symptoms (57.1%), followed by infections, headache and diarrhea, etc. Self-medication was the most common category of drugs used by all the participants except highly educated who used drugs prescribed by physician.¹¹ Pushpa R Wijesinghe et.al had conducted a community-based cross-sectional study, data were

collected from 1800 adults selected from Gampaha and Polonnaruwa districts and findings shows that prevalence of medication use (allopathic, traditional, home remedies) in urban and rural population was 33.9% and 35.3%, respectively. Self-medication prevalence of allopathic drugs in the urban sector (12.2%) was significantly higher than in the rural (7.9%) sector.¹² I Banerjee and T Bhadury had conducted a cross-sectional questionnaire-based study was conducted among the undergraduate medical students and . It was found that 267 (57.05%) respondents practiced self-medication. The principal morbidities for seeking self-medication included cough and common cold as reported by 94 students (35.21%) followed by diarrhea (68 students) (25.47%), fever (42 students) (15.73%), headache (40 students) (14.98%) and pain abdomen due to heartburn/ peptic ulcer (23 students) (8.61%). Drugs/ drug groups commonly used for self-medication included antibiotics (31.09%) followed by analgesics (23.21%), antipyretics (17.98%), antiulcer agents (8.99%), cough suppressant (7.87%), multivitamins (6.37%) and antihelminthics (4.49%). Among reasons for seeking self-medication, 126 students (47.19%) felt that their illness was mild while 76 (28.46%) preferred as it is time-saving. About 42 students (15.73%) cited cost-effectiveness as the primary reason while 23 (8.62%) preferred because of urgency.¹³ Apurba Marak et al had conducted a study to determine the prevalence of self-medication for allopathic drugs among the rural population and to find out the association between certain socio-demographic characteristics and self-medication and concluded that Higher percentages of self-medication practices were seen among the males, higher educational and

socioeconomic status, and younger age group. Health education to people regarding responsible self-medication is necessary to prevent misuse and adverse effect of self-medication.¹⁴ These studies are accordance with the present study findings and prevalence of self-medication practice is very high.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A similar study can be undertaken on a large sample. Similar study can be conducted among health care professional students. A comparative study can be conducted on the similar topic between rural and urban areas. A comparative study can be conducted on the similar topic between educated and illiterate people.

CONCLUSION

The study findings concluded that use of analgesic as a self medication is more in majority of the places. Whenever a drug is prescribed to a person, he/she should be given instructions to the person's comprehensive levels so that it will be helpful for them to understand the impacts of it and also encouraged them to adopt alternative methods to relieve their symptoms instead of using self-mediation there by can prevent the ill effects of self medication such as drug dependence, drug abuse, etc..

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest declared none.

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