

Self Medication Practice among Non-Medical University Students of Bahawalpur

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of this study was to find out the reasons for self-medication among the non medical students.

Study Design: Cross-sectional study.

Place and Duration of Study: This study was conducted at the Department of Medicine, Bahawal Victoria Hospital, QAMC, Bahawalpur from January 2015 to March 2015.

Materials and Methods: Total 500 students participated in this study of Islamia University of Bahawalpur. A self-administered semi-structured questionnaire was distributed after explaining the purpose of this study and taking informed consent from students. The data was analyzed by SPSS V 21 and results were presented in the form of frequency, percentage tables and charts.

Results: Total 500 students participated in the study, including 53% males and 47% females. The most common cause of self-medication practice was the urgency problem (41%), convenience (18%) was the second most common cause. Headaches (45%) and fever (40%) influenza (25%) and diarrhea (20%), respectively were the most frequently reported causes of self-medication. The source of self-medication advice from the family was the main cause of self-medication (52%), own decision (30%) and pharmacist (22%). Our study shows that 63% of the students said they would use the same medicine if they had relapse of same illness, and 35% of the students agreed that they were always used and 45% sometime used to read the prospectus before using non-prescribed medicine. 70% of the respondents said they would not be afraid of side effects of non prescribed medicine. About Drug Dose Information, 55% agreed that the family was the main source, followed by past experience 25%. Our study showed that in 54% cases pharmacies was the most common source of medicine supply without prescription, followed by available medicine at home that was in 28% cases.

It is clear from our study that 46% of pharmacists do not require prescriptions, while 54% of patients replied that they were asked for prescriptions. The most commonly used drugs were 51% of painkillers, followed by antibiotics 28%, anti-pyretic 14%.

Conclusion: This study shows that the practice of self-medication practice is very high among non-medical educated youth.

Key Words: Self-Medication; Non Medical; University Students; Adverse affects.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is selection and use of medicines by individual to treat a self-perceived or self-diagnosed diseases or symptoms.¹ Re-use of previous prescription to buy Medicines, use medicine without prescription and share drugs with relatives or use them at home is the main factor in the practice of self-medication without a doctor's supervision.²

Many previous studies have shown that the prevalence of self medication in many countries such as European countries is as high as 68%, in India 31%³, 59% in

Nepal;⁴ this proportion in Kuwaiti adolescents is as high as 92%.⁵ Adolescents are the most vulnerable groups that are highly influenced by the media and the Internet and that promote self-medication behavior.⁶ However, the reliability of the information source is difficult to judge, so the lack of awareness of young adults face scientifically unproven information.⁷

Several studies have reported that Pakistan's self-drug rates are as high as 51%), out of which 76% of self-drugs are practicing in Karachi ⁸ and 41% are in Islamabad.⁹ Self medicine can be good for personal health and be recognized by World Health Organization as part of self - care.¹⁰ Self-medication can be helpful in prevention and treatment of common diseases, but unreasonable use of medicine causes drug-resistant that is the most common reason of adverse drug reactions.¹¹ The Non-prescription drugs are known as over the counter drugs and are available in commonly used as painkillers, NSAIDS, cough and cold medications, ant allergic drugs, vitamins And energy supplements .

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Although their excessive use of these medicines can cause serious side effects.¹² The aim of this study was to find out the reasons for self-medication among the non medical students and to make them understand the proper use of drugs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was conducted in the Department of Medicine, Bahawal Victoria Hospital, QAMC, Bahawalpur from January 2015 to March 2015 among the students of Islamia University Bahawalpur. Total 500 students participated in this study. A self-administered semi-structured questionnaire was distributed after explaining the purpose of this study and taking informed consent from students.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts, one partially assessing the demographic profile of the participants and other assessing the prevalence and practice of self-medication. The last part involved students' attitudes towards self-medication, information about drug types, and the type of illness for which medicine being used and the reason of not consulting a doctor.

The completeness of the questionnaire was evaluated and only the completed questionnaire was considered for final analysis. The data was analyzed by SPSS V 21 and results were presented in the form of frequency, percentage tables and charts.

RESULTS

Total 500 students participated in the study, including 53% males and 47% females (Table 1). The most common cause of self-medication practice was the urgency problem (41%), convenience (18%) was the second most common cause (Table 2). Headaches (45%) and fever (40%) influenza (25%) and diarrhea (20%), respectively were the most frequently reported causes of self-medication. The source of self-medication advice from the family was the main cause of self-medication (52%), own decision (30%) and pharmacist (22%) (Table 3). Our study shows that 63% of the students said they would use the same medicine if they had relapse of same illness, and 35% of the students agreed that they were always used and 45% sometime used to read the prospectus before using non-prescribed medicine. 70% of the respondents said they would not be afraid of side effects of non prescribed medicine.

Table No. 1: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	265	53
Female	235	47
Total	500	100

About Drug Dose Information, 55% agreed that the family was the main source, followed by past experience 25%. Our study showed that in 54% cases

pharmacies was the most common source of medicine supply without prescription, followed by available medicine at home that was in 28% cases. It is clear from our study that 46% of pharmacists do not require prescriptions, while 54% of patients replied that they were asked for prescriptions. (Table 4). The most commonly used drugs were 51% of painkillers, followed by antibiotics 28%, anti-pyretic 14%. (Table 5).

Table No. 2: Reasons for Using Self Medication

	Frequency	Percentage
Urgency of problem	205	41
Cost of consultation	50	10
Problem too insignificant	60	12
Convenience	90	18
Lack of trust in prescribing doctor	60	12
Others	15	3
Don't know	20	4

Table No. 3: Source of medicine

	Frequency	Percentage
Pharmacy	270	54
Homeopath	65	13
Already available at home	140	28
Leftover from previous prescription	20	4
Others	5	1

Table No. 4: Pharmacist require prescription

	Frequency	Percentage
YES	270	54
NO	230	46

Table No. 5: Which medicines used commonly

	Frequency	Percentage
Antibiotics	140	28
Painkillers	255	51
Fever relieving medicines	70	14
Antimalarial	5	1
Nausea and vomiting relieving	20	4
Others	10	2

DISCUSSION

According to the International pharmaceutical Federation, Self-medication is selection and use of medicines by individual to treat a self-perceived or self-diagnosed diseases or symptoms.¹³ Some studies have shown that many factors are increasing self-medication practices, including easy access to drugs, socioeconomic status and more availability of medicinal products.¹⁴ According to our study, the most

common reason of self-medication was the urgency of solving medical problems, less severity of the disease, and the easy availability of medicine directly from medical store, without prescription. A similar study was reported in India¹⁵. However, a study in Tamil Nadu, reported most of the students use self-medication because of the time-saving³, while in a study conducted in Punjab, reported that the most common cause of self-medication was the quick relief.¹⁶ Previous studies and surveys often reported a low severity of disease symptoms.⁹ Our study shows that previous illnesses was also the common causes of self-medication, just as a study conducted in Malaysia¹⁷ and Karachi¹⁸ Our findings show that by reading the instructions in the drug package, knowledge about the dose and side effects by family members experience of previous disease, a high rate was observed to increase the trend of self-medication in non-medical students. The main problem associated with self medication was the waste of resources, increased resistance to pathogens, and severe health hazards such as adverse reactions, misdiagnosis, appropriate treatment delays and morbidity. The adverse affects of this approach should always be emphasized the steps to the community and control it.

Various studies showed that pharmacists play an important role in promoting self-medication behavior among the general population in developing countries.¹⁹ In some developing countries, many drugs are distributed to the counter without medical supervision. Most of the drugs have been purchased directly from the pharmacy, while the domestic medicine stock ranked second.²⁰ The results of this study consistent with the previous studies, the highest ranking was the pharmacy, and the second was the medicine stock at home. However, our study also found that pharmacists require prescriptions, but the difference is not significant. The pharmacist should direct the customer to consult any physician before taking any medicine.⁴ The disease that causes self-medication in our study were headache, cold, fever, stomach pain, diarrhea, and were almost similar to previous studies. The most commonly used drugs for self medication use are analgesics, antibiotics and anti-pyrite. Previous studies have shown that paracetamol NSAIDs were the most commonly used class of drugs. Antibiotics commonly used for self-medication and were obtained mainly through prescription, which was relatively low compared to the prevalence of antibiotics used in Nepal. A shocking percentage of students in our study taking antibiotics without proper clinical evaluation. These results were comparable to those of study in southern Spain 41% and in Croatia 38%, took antibiotics separately and did not consult a doctor. Antibiotic resistance is a worldwide problem, especially in developing countries where antibiotics are available without any prescription. There is a need to raise awareness and implement legislation to promote

sensible and safe practices. Improving the knowledge and understanding of self-medication may lead to the use of principles that limit emerging microbial resistance.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the practice of self-medication practice is very high among non-medical educated youth. It is necessary to take certain measures to overcome the problem of self-treatment, which may involve awareness of the effects of self-medication and education and preventive measures for drug abuse. Health care professionals need to educate consumers about the possible problems with the improper use of drugs by consumers.

Conflict of Interest: The study has no conflict of interest to declare by any author.

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