

SELF MEDICATION FREQUENCY AND ITS CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AMONG MEDICAL STUDENTS OF PRIVATE MEDICAL AND DENTAL COLLEGE OF PESHAWAR

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Abstract

Objective: Determine the frequency, practices and factors contributing to self-medication among medical students of private medical and dental college in Peshawar.

Materials and Methods: Study design was cross-sectional descriptive and was conducted from January till May 2018. Study was conducted in private Medical and Dental College Peshawar. Total of 302 students 185 from medical and 117 from dental college were recruited after taking well-informed consent. Stratified sampling technique was used, from every year a proportional number of students were selected. Pilot study was done on a 10% sample size. Data was collected by face to face interviews. The sample size was calculated using Daniel 99 sample size formula. Data analyzed in SPSS.

Results: The study showed that 256(84.76%) out of 302 students, practice self-medication while 46(15.23%) students did not practice. Results showed that Pain Killer was commonly used by students (59.93%) while herbals (1.78%) are the less common drugs used for self-medication. Headache was a common disease for which self-medication was practised by (48.67%) students of KMC and SBDC. The study shows that 29(14.94%) students out of 194 go for self-medication because they considered it time-saving while 42(21.64%) students practice self-medication due to the easy availability of drugs.

Conclusions: Self-medication is common among medical students.. Headache, fever and pain were the common an illness for which self-medication was done. Painkillers, antibiotics and fever relieving medicines were used. Most common factors contributing to self-medication were that it's time-saving, easy to get medicines from shops and non-availability of doctors when required.

Key Words: Illness, practice, self-medication, factors, students

Introduction

Self-medication is defined as obtaining and consuming drugs without the advice of physician either for diagnosis, prescription or treatment. In another words self-medication involves the use of medicine by the individuals who want to treat symptoms or problems recognized by themselves. Self-medication therefore forms a crucial part of self-care in everyday life. Self-medication also involves getting medicines without doctor recommendation, resubmitting used prescriptions to buy drugs, telling about medicines to friends or relatives or using leftover medicines stored at home¹.

A study done on university students in Karachi showed a prevalence rate of self-medication is 76%². In

Islamabad, the prevalence of self-medication was 42% among medical students³. The prevalence rate is high all over the world; 52% in European countries⁴, 92% in developing countries, 31% in India and 59% in Nepal. Various previous studies have shown that self-medication practices are more common in women and those who live alone, have lower socioeconomic status, have psychiatric problems, medical students and are younger age. Most commonly used drugs were antibiotics, analgesics, antipyretics, cough suppressants and anti-ulcers. The studies showed that the reason for self-medication was a mild illness, to save time and cost effective⁵.

Self-medication patterns vary among different populations and are influenced by various features, such as age, gender, income and expenditure, self-care orientation, educational level, medical knowledge, satisfaction, and no seriousness of illnesses^{6,7}. Self-medication, when practiced correctly, reduces the load on medical services, reduces the time spent in waiting to see the physician, and saves cost especially in economically deprived countries with limited healthcare resources⁸.

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Very few studies regarding self-medication have been conducted in Pakistan which has also conformed prevalence rate of 51%. Medical students are future practitioners and also know about drugs. Therefore this study was designed to know the frequency of students who are practicing self medication and also different factors that contribute to it among medical and dental students of Peshawar

Materials and Methods

It was a cross-sectional descriptive study conducted on students of medical and dental college of Gandhara University, Peshawar. A total of 302 students 185 from medical and 117 from dental college were recruited after taking well-informed consent. This study was conducted for a duration of five months from January to May 2018.

Stratified sampling technique was used, from every year a proportional number of students was selected for the study. A pilot study was done on 10% sample size to check the feasibility and applicability of the questionnaire.

All those students who were willing to participate in the study were included in the study.

Data was collected from students by face to face

interviews. The sample size was calculated using Daniel 99 sample size formula. After editing data was entered in excel sheets and then imported for analysis in SPSS version 21. Results were presented in the form of graph and tables.

Results

The study showed that 256(84.76%) out of 302 practice self-medication while 46(15.23%) students did not practice. Out of these 84% (155) belonged from medical and 87% (101) belonged from dental college.

The analysis of data showed that common health problems for which self-medication is done in both medical colleges were more or less similar like fever, headache, cough, sore throat and vomiting.

The common drugs used by students were analgesics, antibiotics and antipyretics drugs were commonly used. Very few students 1.78% used herbal medicines.

Analysis of data regarding factors contributing to self-medication showed that most of the students think it's time-saving to start treatment quickly, few said that medicines could be easily purchased or available even without a prescription and few also mentioned non-availability of any doctor when they needed consultation.

Table 1: Proportion of Medical and Dental students of Gandhara University Practicing Self-medication

	Medical students	Dental students
Yes	155 (84%)	102 (87%)
No	30 (16%)	15 (13%)
Total	185	117

Table 2: Common health Problem for which self-medication is practice by Medical and Dental students of Gandhara University Practicing Self-medication

	Medical students	Dental students
Fever	62%	38%
Headache	96%	51%
Cough	41%	18%
sore throat	48%	25%
Vomiting	29%	4%
Any other	22%	5%

Table 3 :Common drugs used for self-medication by Medical and Dental students of Gandhara University Practicing Self-medication

	Medical students	Dental students
Analgesics	49%	58%
Antibiotics	32%	28%
Anti- Pyretic	15%	08%
Herbal	02%	02%
Any other	03%	01%

Discussion

Self-medication is being practised worldwide. Globally, the prevalence of self-medication is quite high but varies from place to place. A study done in Gulf medical university in 2013 showed that 65% of students were using self-medication⁹. Another study also showed a high frequency of 71% in India¹⁰. These study results are almost similar to what we have found in our study. Our study showed that 84.76% students of both medical and dental college of Gandhara University practice self-medication. Another study done on self-medication among students in King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah showed 75.2% students reported self-medication¹¹.

In our study, the most commonly used drug for self-medication was found to be analgesics, antibiotics and anti-pyretics in both medical colleges. Most common were the analgesics used as a drug for self-medication in this study. Almost the same findings were found in another study conducted in the Ain Shams University of Egypt, where most common drugs used among students were antibiotics, vitamins, analgesics and sedatives¹².

This study shows that a common health problem for which self-medication was being practised is Headache, fever, cough. Similar findings were shown by another study conducted in Pakistan on university students. According to this research, headaches were the most common disease for which self-medication was done¹³.

The finding of this study also revealed that main factors contributing self-medication were time-saving, easy availability, non-availability of doctors and illness was minor. Similar findings were found in the study conducted in King Abdul Aziz University, Jeddah. The causes found were the illness not serious, lack of time, the urgency of problem and cost of consultation¹¹.

Conclusion

Our study shows that the practice of self-medication was present amongst students of both Medical and Dental college of Gandhara University. The study also shows that the practice of self-medication was higher for minor illnesses; a headache and fever were the common health problems for which the majority of students practice self-medication. It was also observed from the study that majority of students considered self-medication as a good practice and time-saving. The study also showed that analgesics and antibiotic were commonly used drugs for self-medication.

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