



Self-Medication in Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

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KEY WORDS:

Self, Medication,
Knowledge, evaluation

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study was conducted to evaluate 1) ratio of people practicing self-medication in BZU, Multan; 2) their knowledge about effects of self-medication; and 3) views about ways to reduce self-medication practices.

Methodology: The study conducted was questionnaire based during December 2014. It involved a total of 100 participants of which 50 were male and 50 were female. Results: The prevalence of self-medication was found out to be 75%. 48% of the people stated that self-medication can cause both the death of the person as well as the person can become addicted to the medicine. 39% of the participants think that due to lack of awareness people get attracted to self-medication; and 53% of the people take lack of awareness as the leading cause of increasing self-medication practices in Pakistan. 81% people stated that self-medication can be stopped. 52% participants think as media can be used to spread awareness while 15% think that by arranging free camps for the poor, we can reduce the self-medication. While 33% people think that by arranging seminars, we can stop self-medication. **Conclusion:** The prevalence rate as indicated by this study was very high so proper measures should be taken to reduce its rate. For this purpose, the help of media, seminars or camps can be arranged.

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Introduction

Internationally it is reported that self-medication is on a continuous rise. Self-medication can be defined as the use of medicine by a person at his own will or consumption of drugs without any prescription by an authorized physician^[1,2]

Despite of the much public and professional concern about self-medication the rate of its prevalence is high all over the world. In European countries, it is up to 68%^[3] and even much higher in developing countries^[4] as it is 92% in Kuwait^[5].

Our neighboring

country India has the prevalence rate up to 31%^[6] and it is about 59% in Nepal^[4]. Few studies regarding to self-medication in Pakistan have also confirmed that self-medication practices are much higher in Pakistan and are up to 51%^[7]. Despite the efforts to limit self-medication practices it has reached to an alarming level^[8]. Its practice is common in both men and women and especially among the people who live alone or have a low socioeconomic status.

In Pakistan almost every pharmacy sells medicine

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without any prescription^[9]. Youth has been widely practicing self-medication due to increased advertisements of drugs without spreading of awareness of its bad effects. This study was conducted

to evaluate 1) ratio of people practicing self-medication 2) their knowledge about effects of self-medication 3) ways to reduce self-medication practices.

Methodology

This study was a questionnaire-based survey. The survey was conducted in Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan during December 2014. A convenience sample of 100 people including both male and female of age 20 to 35 years was taken. The study involved the students of different departments of the university including Department of Pharmacy, Institute of Molecular Biology and Biotechnology, Botany and Zoology; and Hostels of the University. Teachers and other clerical staff members were also included in the study. Illiterate staff of the university like Khakrobe was excluded.

A self-administered questionnaire was distributed amongst the participants after explaining the purpose of the study and taking informed consent. Any ambiguities in the questions or responses were removed before its implementation.

The questionnaire was divided into six questions. The first was for knowing the respondent's knowledge about self-medication. The second question was about knowing if the respondents think that self-medication could be dangerous or not. The third question was about the reasons why people get attracted to self-medication. The fourth question was that why the trend of self-medication is increasing in Pakistan.

The fifth and sixth question was about whether the respondents think that self-medication can be stopped if yes then what the means of reducing self-medication practices rate are.

Results :

With a response rate of 99.9% total 100 people with age among 20yr to 35yr participated in this survey. Among the 100 people 50 were males and 50 were females. All of the participants were Muslims. The prevalence of self-medication was found to be 75%. 38% of the people (22% male, 16% female) think that by practicing self-medication one can be addicted to the medicine, and 14% of the people (8% male, 6% female) think that self-medication can cause death of the person and other 48% of the participants (20% male, 28% female) think that self-medication practicing can lead to both addiction as well as the death of the person.

39% of the participants (16% male, 23% female) think lack of awareness as an attraction factor of self-medication for the people while 37% (18% male, 19% female) think that people are not able to pay doctor's fee that is why they get attracted to self-medication. But other 24 % (16% male, 18% female) say that it has become a trend to follow self-medication.

When participants were asked the cause of increasing trend of self-medication in Pakistan 33% of the participants (18% male, 15% female) blamed increase in doctor's fee while 14% (7% male, 7% female) blamed tradition following as the cause of increase in trend of self-medication and the remaining 53% (25% male, 28% female) said that it was the lack in awareness among the people of Pakistan that has led to an increase in the trend of self-medication. About 81% of the participants (42% male, 39% female) think that self-medication practices can be stopped¹⁰.

The last question asked from the participants was the ways to spread awareness to stop self-medication said that by arranging free medical camps it is possible to stop self-medication but 52% of them (25% male, 27% female) answered that awareness through media would be the best way to stop self-medication. On the other hand, 33% (18% male, 15% female) think that arrangement of seminars would be the best possible way to reduce self-medication practices.

Discussion:

Self-medication is referred to as using medicine without physician's consultation." or using old medicine present in home" The prevalence rate of self-medication in Pakistan is recorded to an alarming level and is equally found in both in male and female contestants. It is important to mention here that all the participants belonged to a well-educated category of the society. So, if this percentage of prevalence is found in a society which is considered educated and who know what the harmful effects of self-medication is then the rate among other people who are unaware of its danger is more serious cause for concern¹³. Although self-medication can treat minor ailments as headache but this does not make it less dangerous. If the students and other people of Pakistan knew that how devastating the self-medication could be instead of knowing that it is bad I think it would be helpful in reducing the rate of self-medication¹⁴. To spread the awareness help of media can be taken or we could conduct seminars or the free camps for the poor so that instead of going to any quack or doing self-medication, poor people can come and visit an authorized doctor¹⁵.

Declaration Of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Conclusion

The prevalence rate of self-medication as indicated by this study is very high so proper measures should be taken to reduce its rate. For this purpose, the help of media, seminars or free medical camps can be arranged.

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Author's Contribution

F.B.: Created concept and design of the research, prepared initial draft, collected data, interpreted the results and generated discussion and conclusion.

S.N: Data collection and Proof reading.

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