

Evaluation of Self Medication amongst Nursing Students of Bastar Region: A Questionnaire Based Study

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Abstract

Self-medication provides low cost alternative for expensive medical management but inappropriate use can cause problems. For Nursing undergraduates such practice has special significance since they have medical knowledge but very superficial and also its application is limited. Hence the present study was planned to evaluate the status of students studying in different years of B.Sc. Nursing.

This questionnaire based study was performed on 142 Nursing students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd year aged between 17-24 years. Mean age was found to be 20.5 years (± 2.5 years). A prevalidated questionnaire was distributed amongst the participants after explaining the purpose of the study and taking informed consent.

The results obtained from this study showed that out of 142 students 120 (84.50 %) students used self medication. Commonest source of information for self medication were seniors and colleagues 40 (33.33%), and the most common indication for self medication was common cold 41 (34.16 %).

D'cold Total 49 (40.83%) was the most common medication used as self medication. Only 16 (13.33%) students were having the knowledge about content, dose, duration of therapy and adverse drug reaction of the medication that they used. The most common source to obtain medicines for self medication was pharmaceutical store 80 (66.67 %).

The findings from this study highlights the striking prevalence of self medication among nursing students, the lack of knowledge and the risks associated with them. We recommend that a global approach must be taken to prevent this problem from escalating which would involve awareness and education regarding the implications of self medication, strategies to prevent the supply of medicines without prescription by pharmacies and strict rules regarding pharmaceutical advertising.

Keywords: Evaluation, Self medication, Nursing student, Bastar region, Questionnaire based study

1. Introduction

Self medication is defined as the utilization of drugs to treat self-diagnosed disorders or symptoms, or the irregular or continuous use of a prescribed drug for chronic or repeated diseases or symptoms[1]. Medicines for self medication are often called Non-Prescription or Over the Counter (OTC) and are available without a doctor's prescription through pharmacies. Self-medication is now increasingly being considered as a component of self-care[2]. Studies done on self-medication reveal that it is fairly common practice, especially in economically deprived countries. WHO has also pointed out that responsible self-medication can help to prevent and treat ailments that don't require medical consultation and provide a cheaper alternative for treating common illnesses. However, it is also recognized that responsible self-medication must be accompanied by appropriate health information[3]. In several studies, it has been found that inappropriate self-medication results in wastage of resources, increased resistance to pathogens and generally entails serious health hazards such as adverse drug reactions, prolonged suffering and drug dependence. On the other hand, if done appropriately, self medication can readily relieve acute medical problems, can save time spent in waiting to see a doctor and may be economical also[4]. Though several studies have been carried out amongst different population settings regarding self-medication, there is paucity of literature among nursing students. Since they are future health workers of community, it is very much important to know their knowledge level regarding different aspects of self-medication.

Hence, this study was planned with the objective to assess the knowledge and practice pattern of self-medication in nursing students and to study whether their knowledge about drugs and diseases resulted in any change in their practice level.

2. Materials and Methods

This was a questionnaire based study and the locus of study was Department of Pharmacology, Late Shree Baliram Kashyap Memorial Government Medical College Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh).

After collecting signed Informed Consent, A prevalidated questionnaire was distributed to 142 students studying in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year B.Sc Nursing at Government Nursing College, Jagdalpur (Chhattisgarh).

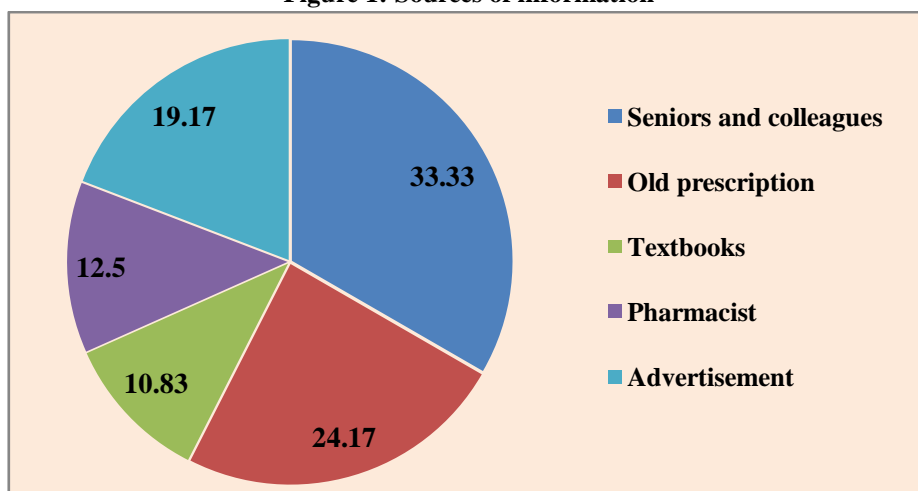
The questionnaire consisted of specific questions regarding the knowledge about self medication, indications for self medication, treatment modalities, dose and duration of therapy, adverse effects of medicine used as self medication and the knowledge about the source of information of medicines used for self medication.

3. Results

A total of 142 students of age group 17-24 years were selected, all were females, and self medication was reported among 120 (84.50 %) students.

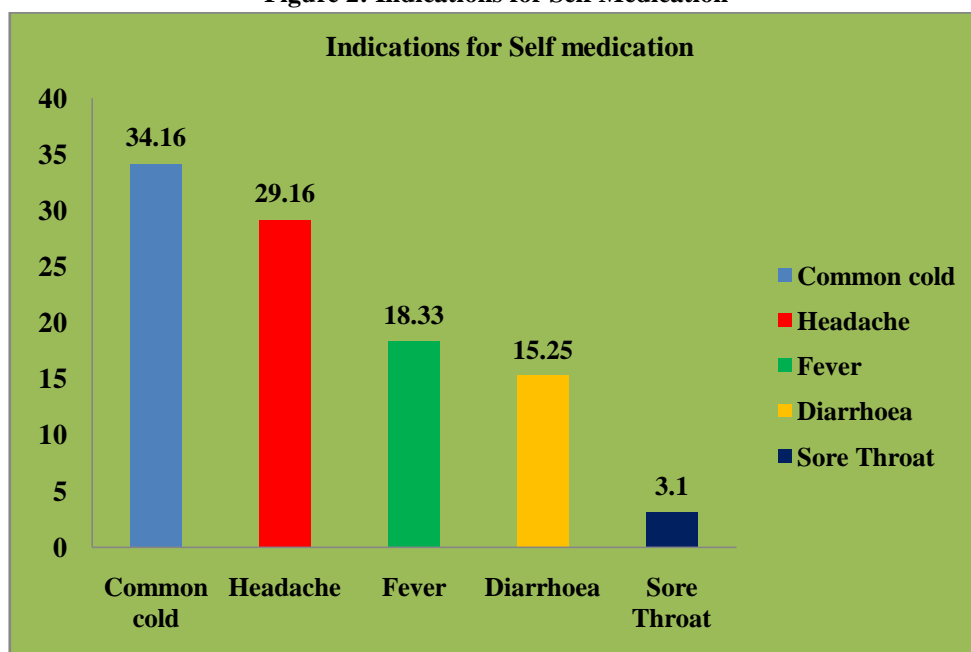
Sources of information for self medication (Figure-1).

Figure 1: Sources of information



The most common ailments for which self-medication were used were: the common cold 41 (34.16%) headache 35 (29.16 %) and fever 22 (18.33%) (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Indications for Self Medication



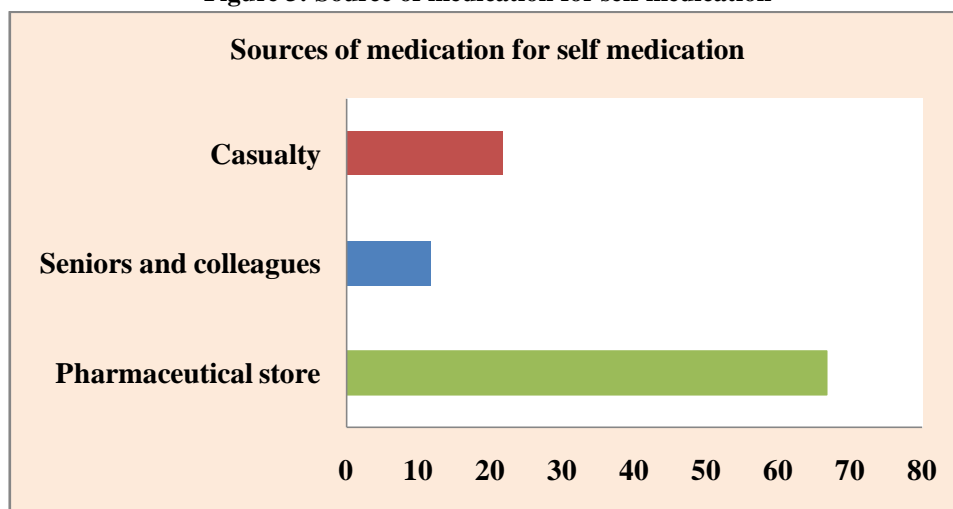
Most commonly used drugs for self medication are D-cold Total 49 (40.83) for Common cold, Crocin 48(40.00) for fever, Disprin 42(35.00%) for headache whereas Vicks 40(33.34%) and Ors 38(31.67%) were used for sore throat and diarrhea respectively. (Table-1).

Table 1: Medication Used For Self Medication

Indication	Medication	Number	Percentage
Fever	Crocin	48	40.0
	Calpol	25	20.84
	Combiflam	18	15.0
	Pacimol	13	10.83
	Dolo-650	16	13.33
Headache	Disprin	42	35.00
	Zandu Balm	40	33.34
	Saridon	14	11.67
	Brufen	13	10.83
	Nice	11	9.16
Common cold	D-cold total	49	40.83
	Vicks action-500	33	27.5
	Sinarest	17	14.16
	Alerid	12	10.00
	Anacin	5	4.17
	Avil	4	3.34
Diarrhea	ORS	38	31.67
	NorfloX-TZ	20	16.67
	ORS+NorfloX TZ	18	15.00
	ORS+Metrogyl	15	12.5
	Metrogyl	13	10.83
	Enterokinol	8	6.67
	Ciplox	5	4.16
	Oflomac	3	2.5
Sore Throat	Vicks	40	33.34
	Strepsil	31	25.83
	Mox	19	15.83
	Azimax	14	11.67
	Septran	9	7.5
	Althrocin	7	5.83

Sources of the medication for self medication among Nursing student was pharmaceutical store 80(66.67%), Casualty 26(21.67%) and seniors and Colleagues 14(11.66 %) figure-3.

Figure 3: Source of medication for self medication



Of the respondents, (10.00 %) were unaware content, dose, duration of therapy and adverse drug reaction, (Table -2)

Table 2: Knowledge about self medication

Level of knowledge about medication	Number	Percentage
Content	41	34.17
Content and Dose	30	25.00
Content, Dose and Duration of Therapy	21	17.5
Content, Dose, Duration of therapy and adverse drug reaction	16	13.33
Not knowing	12	10.00

However no adverse drug reaction was reported by nursing students during self medication, or may be due to lack of knowledge they may have not able to recognize the adverse drug reaction.

3. Discussion

In the present study we found that self-medication as the common practice amongst Nursing students 120(84.50 %) in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year Nursing students of the Bastar region. Other studies indicate that self-medication practice is not only common in medical students but also in other categories of students as well as in general population[5]. In general population of Jammu region it was found that 70% people practiced self-medication [6] while it was found to be upto 87% in UP region of India[7].

In West Bengal, it is observed that self-medication practice is common in medical students [8]. In Nagpur region of Maharashtra it is observed that self-medication much more (74.71% to 77.98%) [9]. Previous studies on self medication amongst medical students in Bastar region was (90.60 %)[10] Above studies by various sources indicate different patterns of self-medication practiced among various categories.

An alarming percentage, 12(10.00%), of students had taken self medication without the knowledge of content, dose, duration of therapy and adverse drug reaction.

The availability of more complex drugs groups such as antibiotics without prescriptions is a source of great concern[11], Moreover, the practice of self medication often has many adverse effects and can lead to many problems, including the global emergence of Multi-Drug Resistant pathogens [12], drug dependence and addiction [13], masking of malignant and potentially fatal diseases [14], hazard of misdiagnosis [15], problems relating to over and under dosaging [16], drug interactions [17] and tragedies relating to the side effect profile of specific drugs [18]. The challenge in controlling the problem of self medication is to achieve the necessary high level of consumer safety. It may be recommended that by monitoring usage of self medication, in addition to data recording and education, safe and effective use of such medicines can be promoted.

4. Conclusion

The prevalence of self medication practices is alarmingly high in the Nursing student of Bastar region although it is less than that of medical students of the same region .Self management of acute, intermittent and long-term conditions is likely to become more extensive in future. A balance needs to be struck between safety and patient autonomy. They are referred to medicines mostly by brand names to get relief from common conditions like fever and pain. Mostly senior students have better understanding about self-medication although junior students need more training and education. Students should be educated for proper use of self-medication drugs from the beginning of their curricular activities. It was also observed that brand forms of the drugs were more popular amongst the students rather than their generic counterparts concluding that there was a marked impact of advertising on their mindsets.

5. Recommendations

We recommend that a holistic approach must be taken to prevent this problem from escalating which would involve:

- (i) Awareness and Education regarding the implications of self medication.
- (ii) Strategies to prevent the supply of medicines without prescription by pharmacies.
- (iii) Strict rules regarding pharmaceutical advertising.
- (iv) Strategies to make health care easily accessible.

Our study has also opened gateways for further research in this issue, besides showing that it is a real problem and should not be ignored.

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