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Self-medication practice among the students of University of Jaffna

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Objective: This study was designed to study the prevalence and factors influencing self-medication practices (SMP) among the students of University of Jaffna.

Methods: The study was conducted among second and third year undergraduates of University of Jaffna. Population proportional stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and chi square test were used in the data analysis.

Results: Out of 500 participants, 412 (82.4%) responded. Among the respondents, 44.9% (n=185) were males and 55.1% (n=227) were female students. The prevalence of SMP was 61.4% (n=253). Fever was the most common symptom (57.7%, n=146) for which self-medication was used, followed by respiratory symptoms which included cough and common cold (53.3%, n=135), runny nose (49.4%, n=125), nasal congestion (41.9%, n=106) and sore-throat (9.3%, n=49). The most commonly used drugs were paracetamol (44.5%, n=114), antihistamines (20%, n=51) and amoxicillin (12.1%, n=31). Most common reason given by the participants for SMP was to save time (61.3%, n=155). The majority of the participants (87.3%, n=221) get the drugs from pharmacies. There is a statistically significant association between SMP and ethnicity, religion, monthly income, course followed and year of the course. The majority (66.3%, n=273) feel self-medication should be with advice or diagnosis.

Conclusion: Prevalence of SMP among university students was high. The majority of students used SMP to save time. Even though the prevalence of SMP is high, the majority of the students feel that SMP should be with some sort of guidance.