

Knowledge and practice on self-medication with prescription-only medicines among Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Jaffna

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Self-medication refers to use of medicines to treat self-diagnosed diseases. Self-medication of prescription-only medicines may lead to serious adverse effects on health. Allied Health Sciences students were included in this study since they are relatively familiar with medicines. The objectives of the study were to assess the knowledge and practice of self-medication with prescription-only medicines and the association of selected socio-demographic factors among Allied Health Sciences students at the University of Jaffna. It is an institutional-based analytical cross-sectional study. A pre-tested and validated self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from students. A total score given for knowledge of self-medication was 22. Students who scored above 16 were considered to have good knowledge. SPSS statistical software was used to analyse data and the association of factors was analysed by the chi-squared test at 95 % confidence interval. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna. Among the 539 participants, the response rate was 92.39% (n=498). The mean age of participants was 24.39±1.30 years. Most of the students were female (62.4%). Only 26.1 % of participants had good knowledge of self-medication and 56.4 % of participants were used prescription-only medicines as self-usage. The commonly used prescription-only medicines were cetirizine (25.6 %), followed by omeprazole (16.9 %), and antibiotics (8.6 %). Most of them (74.4 %) got medicines from pharmacies and 72.8 % of participants selected the drug for self-medication by previous experience. Gender (p=0.012), course of study (p<0.001), and year of study (p=0.039) had statistically significant associations with self-medication. However, knowledge of self-medication was not significantly associated with self-medication practice. Prevalence of self-medication practice was more among female, pharmacy and third-year students. Even though self-medication practice with prescription-only medicines among Allied Health Sciences Students was high, they have poor knowledge of self-medication.

Keywords: Self-medication, Prescription-only medicines, Knowledge, Practice, Allied Health Sciences students