

## **Knowledge and dispensing practice on over the counter drugs and associated factors on them among the superintendent pharmacists in Jaffna**

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Over the counter or non-prescription drugs are defined as a group of medicines which can be obtained without a valid prescription. Superintend pharmacists are the healthcare professionals who are often approached by patients for their health illnesses. Therefore, they should have proper knowledge and practice on dispensing over the counter. The study aimed to assess the knowledge and dispensing practice on over the counter use and influence of selected socio demographic factors on them among the superintend pharmacists in Jaffna district. This study was carried out as a descriptive cross-sectional study from October 2020 to July 2021 among 67 superintend pharmacists. A self-administered questionnaire was used as a study instrument and validated by supervisors, pharmacologists, and the chief pharmacist. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna. The data were analysed by using SPSS (version 23). The knowledge was assessed according to the mean value of the knowledge score. The relationship between the knowledge and the categorical variables were determined by using chi-square test. The response rate was 89.55 % (n=60). Among the participants 43.3 % had good knowledge on over the counter. Most of the participants (83.3%) were able to define over the counter. Age (p=0.026), working experience (p=0.046) and the highest education level (p=0.033) showed statistically significant association on knowledge. The dispensing practice of the over the counter were very good among the superintend pharmacists. The reasons for the good practice were the age, education level and working experience of the superintend pharmacists. The majority of superintend pharmacists had poor knowledge. The awareness program among superintend pharmacists may reduce the abuse and misuses of the over the counter.

**Keywords:** Over the counter drugs, Knowledge, Dispensing practice, Pharmacists, Jaffna district.