

Self-Medication Practices in Nursing Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Over the counter (OTC) medicines are the drugs that can be sold without the prescription of a registered medical practitioner to the consumer. ^[1] OTC medicines are used as self-medication by students for conditions like fever, pain and cold. Awareness regarding OTC drugs will help to lead better medical practices and will prevent any untoward medical occurrence. ^[2]

Aims and Objectives: The objectives of the study were to assess the frequency of self medication practices and to find out the common drugs used.

Materials and Methods: Non experimental quantitative research approach was used and with purposive sampling data was collected from 150 nursing students of selected nursing college, Haldwani. The tool used for data collection was the self-structured questionnaire on socio-demographic variable, frequency of self medication and common drug usage.

Results: Research findings revealed that out of 150 participants majority of the 84 (56%) students were in the age group of (21 – 24) years, most of the 77 (51.3%) students who participated in the study were from B.Sc. (N) course and majority of the study participants 100(66.7%) were taking drugs without prescription and maximum number 93(62%) of the students were using antipyretics.

Conclusion: The study found that majority of the nursing students was taking over the counter drugs. Though, over the counter drugs are widely used by health care professionals in minor ailments, in future run these drugs might cause adverse effects due to irrational use of them.

Key words: OTC, self medication, practice, nursing students.

INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is consumption of drugs to treat self-diagnosed disorders or symptoms, or the irregular or continuous use of a prescribed drug earlier for chronic or repeated diseases or symptoms. ^[3] There is no directive for the use of OTC drugs in our country. The poor economic status and busy lifestyle of an individual makes him rely on the OTC drugs. In India, it has been shown that knowledgeable people were 76% more likely to self-medicate than illiterate people. ^[4]

Medicines used for self-medicating are often called Non-Prescription or Over the Counter (OTC) which are usually available without a doctor's prescription in pharmacies. Self-medication is now increasingly being considered as a part of self-care. ^[5] The practice of self-medication must be based on authentic medical information otherwise unfounded use of drugs can cause depletion of resources, increased resistance of pathogens, and can lead to health hazards such as adverse drug reaction and prolonged morbidity. ^[6]

Knowledge of OTC medicines is useful for patient to manage common disease and it also decreases the cost of therapy and the time. Though OTC medicine are useful so much but there are also some disadvantages like it reduces opportunities for counseling about possible lifestyle therapies (e.g. exercise and diet), there are chances of misdiagnosis and some adverse drug effect which can be life-threatening. ^[7]

Developed countries report half and two-thirds of the population used NPM (non-prescription medicine), includes over-the-counter medicines. [8-10]

Though many 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. [11]

Thus, the study was conducted to know the practices of self-medication and common ailments to self-medicate.

MATERIALS & METHODS

A descriptive research design is chosen for the present study to assess the frequency of self-medication practices and to find out common drugs used. Exclusive criteria being students who are taking any kind of prescribed treatment.

In this study, about 150 nursing students were selected by purposive sampling technique. The study was conducted after obtaining approval from Principal of College of Nursing and assurance was given to the subjects that the anonymity of each individual will be maintained and the information obtained from them will be kept confidential and informed consent was taken.

The data collecting instrument was prepared by the researcher and was given to three experts were selected based on their teaching and clinical experiences. They were requested to give their opinion on the criteria regarding adequacy, relevance, appropriateness and organization of items in the tools. Desired modifications were incorporated in the tools as per the suggestions of the experts and research guide.

Pre testing and reliability of the instrument was done. The reliability of the tool was checked by test re-test method for stability (0.71). The data collecting instrument consisted of: Socio demographic data (Age, gender, program/class,

educational status of father and mother, occupation of father and mother, sources of information), Frequency of self-medication Practices (Use of self-medication, frequency, commonly used drugs, Other supplements, Nutrition supplements) and Checklist for the pattern of common problems where they consume medications.

Statistical Analysis:

The data were analyzed using IBMSPSS Statistics (Version 20). The study used descriptive statistics i.e. Frequency and Percentages for the analysis of demographical data, self-medication practices and pattern of medication usage in common health problems.

RESULTS

The gathered data was coded in SPSS version 20 and descriptive statistics was used to describe the data.

Table1: Frequency (f) and percentage (%) of socio-demographic variables of Nursing Students. n = 150

Sl.No.	Variable	F	(%)
1	Age (years)		
	• 18-20	66	44%
	• 21-24	84	56%
2	Gender		
	• Male	11	7.3%
	• Female	139	92.7%
3	Program/class		
	• GNM	73	48.7%
	• B.Sc. Nursing	77	51.3%
4	Education Status of Father		
	• Graduate	71	47.3%
	• Intermediate	63	42.0%
	• 10 th pass	13	8.7%
	• Below 10 th	3	2.0%
5	Education Status of mother		
	• Graduate	32	21.3%
	• Intermediate	61	40.7%
	• 10 th pass	33	22.0%
	• Below 10 th	24	16.0%
6	Occupation of Father		
	• Govt	98	65.3%
	• Private	31	20.7%
	• Self- employed	21	14.0%
7	Occupation of Mother		
	• Employed	12	8.0%
	• Housewife	138	92.0%
8	Sources of information		
	• Books	62	41.3%
	• Internet	10	6.7%
	• Shop	2	1.3%
	• Doctor	61	40.7%
	• By self	15	10%

The results showed that majority 84 (56%) of students were in the age group of 21-24 years, most of the 139 (92.7%) students were females. Majority of the 77 (51.3%) students were from B.Sc. Nursing course. It was found that most of the 71 (47.3%) students' father was having graduate and majority of mothers had education till intermediate. Majority of student fathers' were in Government job 98 (65.3%) and maximum number of students' mothers 138 (92.0%) were house makers. Most of students 60 (41.3%) took information from book and only 2(1.3%) students' take information from shop. (See Table 1)

In the self-medication practices were asses in following areas: self-medication practices distribution, frequency of self-medication, previously prescribed self-medication, self-medication for certain conditions, categories of self-medication and nutrient supplements.

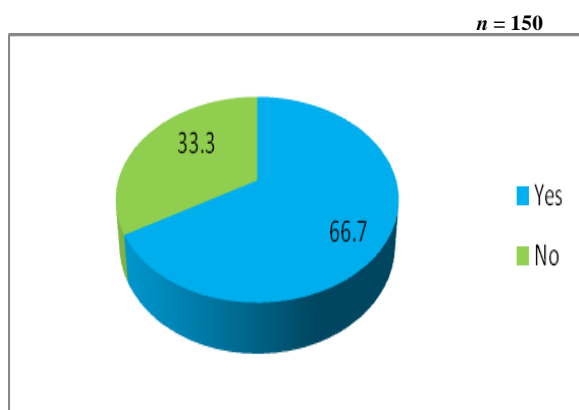


Figure 1: Self-medication practices among Nursing Students.

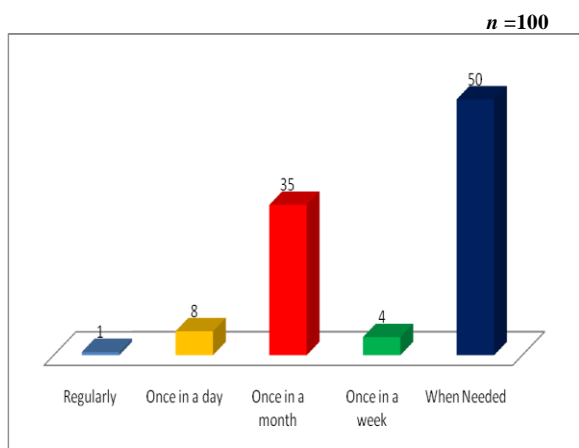


Figure 2: Frequency of self-medication practices.

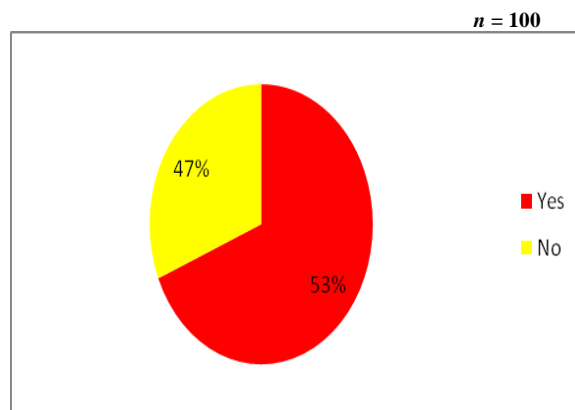


Figure 3: Self mediation with previously prescribed medications.

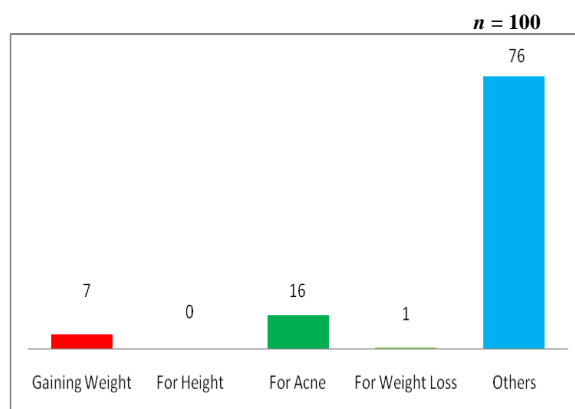


Figure 4: Self mediation practices in certain conditions.

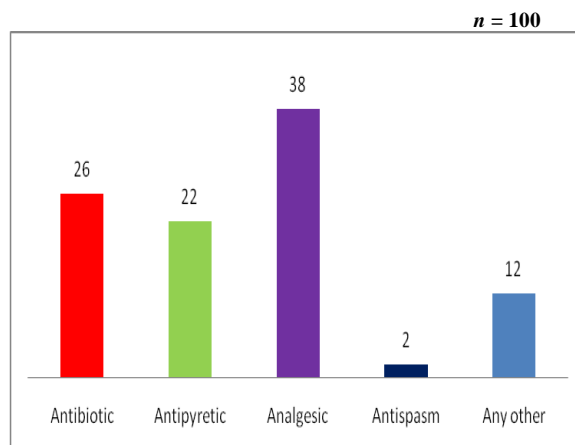


Figure 5: Categories of self-medication

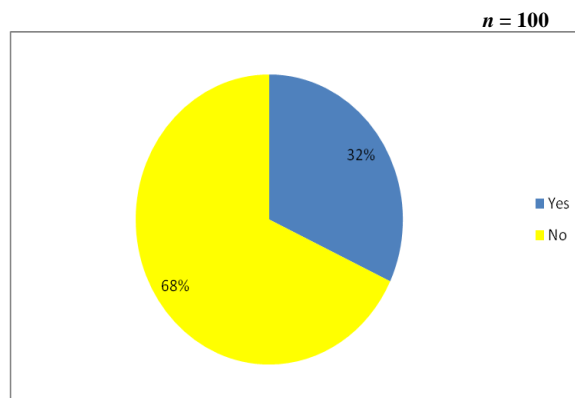


Figure 6: Consumption of Nutrient Supplements.

It was found that maximum percentage 100 (66.7%) of the nursing students self-medicate (See Fig. 1). It was found that most of the students 50(50%) self-medicate whenever needed (See Fig.2). Majority of the nursing students 53 (53%) self-medicate by previously prescribed drugs by doctor (See Fig.3). Maximum number of the nursing students 76 (76%) self-medicate for miscellaneous conditions

(See Fig.4). In the self-medication category it was found that majority of the students 38(38%) self-medicate by taking analgesics (See Fig.5). About 68(68%) of the nursing students do not take any form of nutrient supplement (See Fig. 6).

It was found that maximum number of students self-medicate during fever 83 (83%) and headache 64 (64%) as shown in fig. 7.

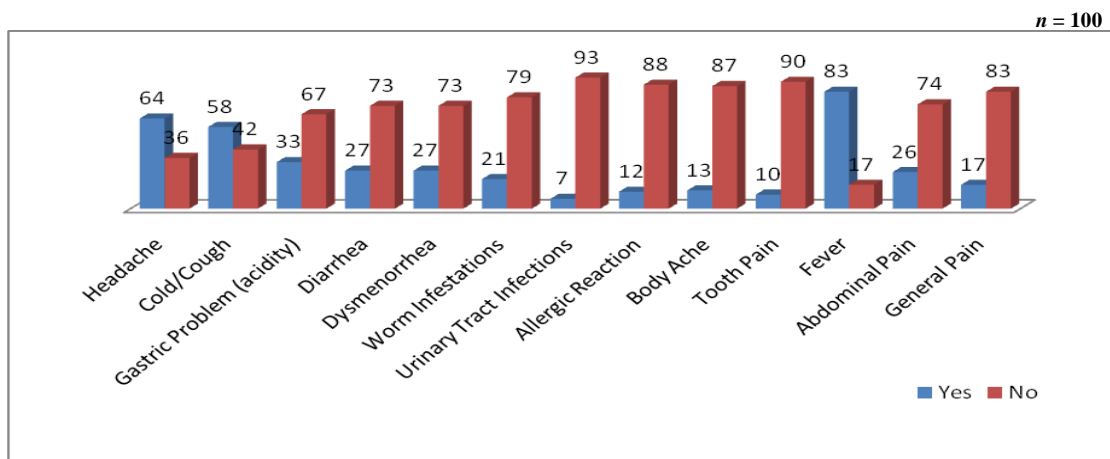


Figure 7: Pattern of medication usage in common health problems

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted among 150 nursing students out of which via purposive sampling 100 students were selected and it was found that maximum percentage 100 (66.7%) of the nursing students self-medicate which is supported by study conducted by Ali S where it was found about 84.50 % nursing students self-medicate. [11] A study conducted by Goel D also supports present study where it was found about 88.24% nursing students self-medicate. [12]

In this study it was found that majority of the nursing students 53 (53%) self-medicate by previously prescribed drugs by doctor which supported by study conducted by Ali S in Chhattisgarh which was found to be (24.7%). [11]

A study conducted in West Bengal shows that self-medication practice is common in medical students. [13] Studies on self-medication practices in Bastar medical students it was found to be (90.60 %). [14]

In this study it was found that majority of the nursing students 38(38%) self-medicate by taking analgesics and antipyretics (22%) which supported by study conducted in Gujarat where Paracetamol (82%) followed by diclofenac sodium (42.5%) was used by students and staff. [7]

Studies mentioned in above sources shows different patterns of self-medication practiced among various categories of health professionals. Medical students and nursing students are in the profession where they get knowledge about diseases and learn about drugs and thus can practice self-medication which can lead to wastage of resources, increases resistance of pathogens and generally entails serious health hazards such as adverse drug reaction, prolonged suffering and drug dependence. [15]

CONCLUSION

The present study indicates that self-medication is widely practiced among nursing students. The common ailments like

headache, cold & cough and fever were reported to be the one for which students' preferred taking self-medication. Though the students' study about pharmacology in their syllabus still they need more teaching and awareness regarding over the counter drugs usage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The researcher would like to acknowledge students nurses for their support and cooperation during the study.

Conflict of Interest: None Declared.

Source of Funding: None

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How to cite this article: Bhandari A, Upadhyay R, Joshi A et al. Self-medication practices in nursing students. *International Journal of Science & Healthcare Research*. 2018; 3(2): 35-39.
