

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Pattern of self- medication pattern among children

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ABSTRACT

Background: Self-medication is acknowledged by the WHO as a component of self-care. The use of medications to address self-diagnosed conditions or symptoms, or the sporadic or ongoing use of a prescription medication for recurring or chronic conditions or symptoms, is known as self-medication. The present study was conducted to assess pattern of self-medication among children.

Materials & Methods: 120 children age ranged 12- 18 years of both genders were selected. Information such as medicines used to treat illness and reasons for self-medication, type of medication used and type of therapy preferred was used.

Results: Out of 120 children, 57 were boys and 63 were girls. Self-medicated drugs were analgesics in 24%, antimicrobials in 12%, antipyretics in 37%, topical preparations in 11%, cough & cold preparations in 10% and antiallergy in 6% children. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$). Therapy used was homoeopathy in 7%, home remedies in 10%, allopathy in 52%, herbal in 14% and combination therapy in 17%. The difference was significant ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Antipyretics were the most often self-used medication, and allopathy was the recommended course of treatment.

Key words: Children, Self-medication, homoeopathy

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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is acknowledged by the WHO as a component of self-care. The use of medications to address self-diagnosed conditions or symptoms, or the sporadic or ongoing use of a prescription medication for recurring or chronic conditions or symptoms, is known as self-medication.¹ Self-medication in Pediatrics refers to the caregiver giving medication without a doctor's advice. Even though over-the-counter (OTC) medications are safe and effective for self-medication, incorrect usage due to ignorance of their interactions and side effects can have major consequences, particularly for young people.² Among the often-used self-medications are analgesics, antipyretics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and cough and cold remedies. Self-medication is the practice of using medications for therapeutic purposes without seeking medical guidance. It is the act of acquiring and using medications without a health professional's recommendation. When self-medication is done improperly, it can lead to bacterial infections, withdrawal symptoms, "drug-induced illness," deaths, and waste of public expenditures.³

Self-medication is the first thing most parents do when their kids get sick.⁴ In both affluent and developing nations, the majority of parents choose to treat common illnesses like fever, cough, cold, and diarrhea on their own without seeking medical advice. Self-medication has become more popular and widespread around the world due to a combination of political, cultural, and economic causes.⁵ These include increased drug availability, careless advertising, pressure to switch from prescription-only to over-the-counter medications, access to healthcare, parent education, and socioeconomic position.⁶ The present study was conducted to assess pattern of self-medication among children.

MATERIALS & METHODS

The present study consisted of 120 children age ranged 12- 18 years of both genders. Parents' gave their written consent to participate in the study. Baseline data of each child such as name, age, gender etc. was recorded. The questionnaire used consisted of information such as medicines used to treat illness and reasons for self-medication, type of medication used

and type of therapy preferred. Data thus obtained were significant. assessed statistically. P value < 0.05 was considered

RESULTS

Table I: Distribution of subjects

Total- 120		
Gender	Boys	Girls
Number	57	63

Table I shows that out of 120 children, 57 were boys and 63 were girls.

Table II: Pattern of self-medication

Self-medicated drugs	Percentage	P value
Analgesics	24%	0.04
Antimicrobials	12%	
Antipyretics	37%	
Topical preparations	11%	
Cough & cold preparations	10%	
Antiallergy	6%	

Table II, graph I shows that self- medicated drugs were analgesics in 24%, antimicrobials in 12%, antipyretics in 37%, topical preparations in 11%, cough & cold preparations in 10% and antiallergy in 6% children. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

Graph I: Pattern of self-medication

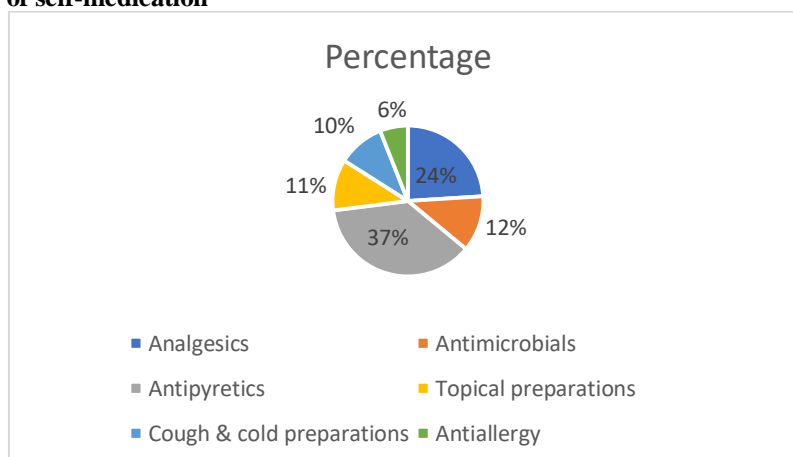


Table III: Commonly used therapy

Therapy	Percentage	P value
Homoeopathy	7%	0.05
Home remedies	10%	
Allopathy	52%	
Herbal	14%	
Combination	17%	

Table III shows that therapy used was homoeopathy in 7%, home remedies in 10%, allopathy in 52%, herbal in 14% and combination therapy in 17%. The difference was significant (P< 0.05).

DISCUSSION

The use of drugs by youngsters is a major global concern. A large number of medications are utilized in outpatient settings. Drugs are typically administered by parents to treat their children's illnesses.⁷ Self-medication, or the use of pharmaceuticals on one's own, has become more common in both developed and developing nations in recent years. Self-medication is the use of drugs to cure or prevent illnesses without first speaking with a

doctor or other healthcare professional.⁸ Everyone needs to understand the advantages and dangers of self medication. Risks linked with self-medication include improper diagnosis, drug interactions, adverse drug reactions and resistance, poor drug selection, and increased polypharmacy.⁹ Self-medication also increases the risk of drug misuse and dependency. Inadequate dosages, excessively long-term drug use, and taking two medications at once may also be caused by people's inability to recognize that the same

drug has already been taken under a different brand name, which can have dangerous repercussions.¹⁰ The waste of medical resources and the potential for hospitalization are two consequences of unwarranted and ridiculous self-medication.^{11,12} The present study was conducted to assess pattern of self-medication among children.

We found that out of 120 children, 57 were boys and 63 were girls. Cruz et al¹³ determined the prevalence of medication use in children and adolescents. The prevalence of drug consumption was 56.57%, and 42.43% showed no consumption. The use of medicinal plants was 72.9% for drug users and 74.3% for non-users. The health conditions for consumption were cough, common cold, flu, nasal congestion or bronchospasm (49.7%), fever (5.4%), headache (5.4%), diarrhea, indigestion, and abdominal colic (6.7%). In cases of self-medication, 30.57% of the drugs were given by the mother, and 69.42% were prescription drugs. Self-medication was prevalent using paracetamol (30.2%), dipyron (20.8%), and cold medicine (18.8%). There was increased use of analgesics/antipyretics, followed by respiratory medications, systemic antibiotics, histamine H1 antagonists, and vitamins/antianemics.

We found that self-medicated drugs were analgesics in 24%, antimicrobials in 12%, antipyretics in 37%, topical preparations in 11%, cough & cold preparations in 10% and anti-allergy in 6% children. Pereira FS et al¹⁴ determined the prevalence of self-medication in children and adolescents. The prevalence of self-medication was 56.6%. Mothers (51%) and drugstore employees (20.1%) were most frequently responsible for self-medication. The main groups of self-prescribed drugs were: analgesic/antipyretic and non-hormonal anti-inflammatory drugs (52.9%); drugs acting on the respiratory tract (15.4%) and gastrointestinal drugs (9.6%); and systemic antibiotics (8.6%). The situation that most commonly motivated self-medication were respiratory diseases (17.2%), fever (15%), and headache (14%). Subjects in the age group of 7-18 years (odds ratio = 2.81) and public health care users (odds ratio = 1.52) showed increased risk for self-medication.

We found that therapy used was homeopathy in 7%, home remedies in 10%, allopathy in 52%, herbal in 14% and combination therapy in 17%. Naaraayan et al¹⁵ found that prevalence of self-medication was 32%. Common illnesses leading to self-medication were fever, cough and cold. Commonly used drugs were paracetamol, anticold medications and antibiotics. Most of them used previous prescription to procure the drugs and previous experience on efficacy was the most common reason cited. Older children were more commonly self-medicated than the younger ($p = 0.001$). Self-medication is encountered in 32% of children attending the outpatient department of the hospital and is more common in older children.

Alhur et al¹⁶ found that 75.5% of respondents engaged in self-medication, primarily on an occasional basis. While 59.8% of participants perceived self-medication as safe, 17.5% reported experiencing adverse effects. Respondents strongly advocated for increased regulatory measures (87.7%) and a pressing need for enhanced public education (92.6%) to address the associated risks. The study highlights the widespread practice of self-medication in Saudi Arabia, influenced by various factors, and underscores the need for targeted health policies and educational campaigns to mitigate these risks.

CONCLUSION

Authors found that antipyretics were the most often self-used medication, and allopathy was the recommended course of treatment.

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