

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Self-Medication among Nursing Students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus Kohalpur Banke

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Self-medication is widely practiced among the nursing students because of easy availability and accessibility of the drugs. Inappropriate self-medication can lead to increased resistance among pathogens, wastage of resources, can cause serious harm and increase morbidity; which indicates needs of responsible self-medication. **Aim:** This study was to assess the self-medication knowledge, attitude and practice among nursing students. **Methods:** This was a questionnaire based descriptive cross sectional study conducted in Nursing students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus, Kohalpur, on August 2019. Questions related to various aspects of self-medication was used for data collection. **Results:** Out of 120 students, 102 (85%) students were found practicing self-medication with reason of no need to visit the doctor for minor illness 78%, for quick relief 75% and for time saving 50%. Only 15% not taken self-medication reasoning there was risk of adverse effects 65% and risk of using wrong drugs 60%. The source of information of the drugs used for self-medication was previous prescription and text book was 50% and 35% respectively and the source of the drugs was medical store, 88.2%. Majority of 96% took for headache followed by fever 83.3%; menstrual symptoms 68.6%; and cough and cold 68.6% and diarrhoea 64.7%. Most of the students 96% took analgesics and antipyretics drugs. **Conclusion:** Our study shows that self-medication is significantly practiced by nursing students. There is need to aware them about advantages and disadvantages of self-medication in order to ensure safety and proper use of drugs.

Keywords: Attitude and Practice, Knowledge, Nursing students, Self-medication

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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is use of drugs to treat self-diagnosed disorders or symptoms or the intermittent or continued use of a prescribed drug for chronic or recurrent disease or symptoms.¹ Self-medication practice is a growing concern among nursing students and access to drugs and handling them in their future practice makes nursing students more susceptible to self-medication which can lead to incorrect or delay in diagnosis, increased resistance among pathogens, wastage of resources and leads to serious health hazards such as adverse drug reaction and increase morbidity because of drug interactions.^{2,3,4,5} In this situation, we should educate the students about advantages and disadvantages of self-medication and about rationale use of drugs to the students.⁶ Present study was to assess the self-medication practice and related knowledge and attitude among nursing students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus.

METHODS

This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in nursing students of Nepalgunj Nursing Campus, Kohalpur, on August 2019, after getting permission from ethical committee of Nepalgunj Medical Campus. A total number of 120 PCL nursing students of first, second and third year were included in the study. Pre-validated questionnaire consisting of twelve closed end questions was used for data collection. The nature of study and the procedure of completing the questionnaire was explained to students. The collected data was entered on Microsoft excel and was summarized as counts and percentages.

RESULTS

All participated students were female. Mean age \pm standard deviation in years was 18.42 ± 1.07 ; range was from 17 to 22 years. Out of 120 students, 102 (85%) students were found practicing self-medication and the 18 (15%) not taken self-medication.

The source of information of the drugs used for self-medication was previous prescription 50%, text book 35%, advertise 10% and classroom teaching 5%. In 98 (88.2%) the source of the drugs used for Self-medication was medical store.

Knowledge

Most common reasons for taking self-medication were that there was no need to visit the doctor for minor illness 78%, for quick relief was 75% and for time saving 50%. There was ease and convenience in taking self-medication (61%). (Table I)

Reasons	Percentages of students
No need to visit the doctor for minor illness	78%
Quick relief	75%
Time saving	50%
Confidence on your knowledge about medicines	15%
Economical	18%
Ease and convenience	61%
Learning opportunity	10%

Table I : Student’s reasons in favour of self-medication

The most common reasons for not taking Self-medication were that there was risk of adverse effects 65%, risk of using wrong drugs 60%, risk of misdiagnosing 53% and lack of knowledge about medicines was 35% (Table II).

Reasons	Percentages of students
Lack of knowledge about medicines	35%
Risk of adverse effects	65%
Risk of using wrong drugs	60%
Risk of misdiagnosing	53%
Risk of drug dependence	20%
Risk of using drugs wrongly	30%

Table II : Student’s reasons not taking self-medication

Attitude

In our study we found that out of 120 students 32% nursing students accepted the fact that they always visited a qualified practitioner whenever they fell ill, while 62% students said that they sometimes visited and 6% students visited rarely.

Practice

Among 102 self-medication practicing students, most of the students, 96% took self-medication for headache followed by fever, 83.3%; menstrual symptoms 68.6%; and cough and cold 68.6% and diarrhea 64.7%. (Table III).

Indications	Number of students (Percentages) n=102
Headache	98 (96%)
Fever	85 (83.3%)
Cough, cold, sore throat	70 (68.6%)
Stomach ache	20 (19.6%)
Menstrual symptoms	70 (68.6%)
Vomiting	38 (37.2%)
Diarrhea	66 (64.7%)
Ocular symptoms	8 (7.8%)

Table III : Student’s indications for self-medication

Most of the students took analgesics and antipyretics drugs 96% followed by decongestant 63.7%, antispasmodics by 60% and lozenges and multi vitamins 44%. (Table IV).

Drugs	Number of students (Percentages) n=102
Analgesics/antipyretic	98 (96%)
Antimicrobials	30 (29.4%)
Multivitamins	45 (44%)
Antispasmodics	60 (58.8%)
Decongestants	65 (63.7%)
Lozenges	45 (44%)

Table IV : Drugs used for self-medication

DISCUSSION

In our study 102 (85%) students were found practicing self-medication, which is supported by the studies reported in india 88.24% by Goel Divya et al⁷, 88.5% by Sankdia RK at al⁸ 76% in Karachi by Zafar SN et al⁹ ; 94.1% in Slovenia by Klemenc-Ketis Z et al¹⁰; 76.9% in Bahrain by James et al.¹¹

In our study students gave reasons for taking Self-medication were that there was no need to visit the doctor for minor illness 78%, for quick relief was 75%, ease and convenience 61% and for time saving 50% and reasons given by rest of the students for not taking Self-medication were that there was risk of adverse effects 65%, risk of using wrong drugs 60%, risk of misdiagnosing 53% and lack of knowledge about medicines was 35%. Similar findings were there in the study done by Sankdia RK at al⁸ and by James et al.¹¹

In our study, we found that source of information of the drugs used for Self-medication was previous prescription 50% and text book 35%, this may be due to the fact that they had visited the doctor for the same illness previously and do not found it necessary to again visit the doctor for the similar complaints. The source of the drugs used for Self-medication was medical store 88.2%, this may be due to the high tendency of selling and purchasing medicines without the prescription of doctors in developing countries like us. Similar results were found in the study done by Sankdia RK at al⁸ and by Klemenc ketis et al.¹⁰

We found that most of the students took analgesics for problem of headache and menstrual symptoms, this may be due to the strain on eyes while studying and lack of sleep and pain during menstrual period respectively for which they had to take analgesics and Significant students also took antipyretic for fever. Similar findings were there in study done by by Goel Divya et al⁷. Sankdia RK at al⁸ by Zafar et al.⁹, James et al.¹¹, Thadani et al.¹² and Phukan Swopna et al.¹³

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of this study were small sample size, non-comparison nursing students according to their knowledge level and study year, no appropriate dose, frequency and duration of medication and absence of interventions like hazards of irresponsible self-medication. It will be better if it had been done in large scale populations and Multicentric as well as medical and non-medical students with detail history of drug taken for self-medication with antibiotics.

CONCLUSION

Our study shows that self-medication is significantly practiced by PCL nursing students. It is due to the lack of awareness about the health hazards and high tendency of selling and purchasing medicines without the prescription of doctors in our country. Access to drugs and handling them in their future practice makes nursing students susceptible to self-medication. Although the practice of self-medication is inevitable, the awareness program should be initiated and curriculum should include for nursing about self-medication and government should strictly prohibit the selling and purchasing medicines without the prescription of doctors.

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