

## Study to Assess the Prevalence and Awareness Regarding Self-Medication among Nursing Students in Selected Institute of Nashik, Maharashtra

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### Abstract

**Context:** *Self medication is usually defined as intake of any type of drug for treating oneself without professional supervision to relieve an illness or a condition. Self medication is an issue with serious global implication. In this study it was aimed to assess prevalence and awareness regarding self medication among nursing students.*

**Methods:** *A cross sectional study was conducted on a sample of randomly selected nursing student. Data was collected using structured questionnaire and analysed by using descriptive statistics in terms of percentage and mean.*

**Results:** *The sample consisted of 100 nursing students of them 88% females and 12% male students. Awareness of self medication was 89% and prevalence of self medication was 96%. Majority (35%) of the students practicing self medication for quick relief, (38%) of the students practicing self medication for fever, (71%) of the students take self medication for minor illness, (69%) of the students get information from medical professionals, (73%) of the students get medication from medical stores, (46%) of the students use allopathic system for self medication, (44%) of the students use analgesics drugs for self medication and (44%) of the students take medication till relief from symptoms.*

**Conclusion:** *It seems that designing and implementation of educational programs to increase seriousness about side effect of self medication may be usefulness of the result in order to prevent self medication. Exposure and knowledge about drugs are main contributors of self medication.*

**Key words:** *Self Medication, Prevalence, Nursing students*

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### Introduction

Self-medication is the selection and use of non-prescription medicines by individual's own initiatives to treat self-recognized illnesses or symptoms. Self-care is what people do for their own selves to establish and maintain health, prevent and deal with illness (WHO, 1998). It is a broad concept encompassing hygiene, nutrition, lifestyle, environmental factors, socioeconomic factors and self-medication. Self-medication, as one element of self-care, is the selection and use of medicines by individuals to treat self-recognized illnesses or symptoms<sup>1</sup>.

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Craving for medicine and self-medication has been part of mankind from one generation to another. People generally hold the view that medicines should be used in the event of any sickness or discomfort<sup>2</sup>. Medicines today can restore your health and improve the quality of life; on the other hand if it is not used correctly, it can cause serious harm to your body. Very many people end up in hospital and fail to get better because they have not taken or used their medicines properly.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence rate of self medication is high in developed and under developing countries. For example 68% in European countries and 31% in India.<sup>4</sup>

Inappropriate self medication results in irrational use of drugs, wastage of resources, increased resistance of pathogens, entails serious health hazards such as adverse reactions and prolonged sufferings. If action is not taken,

the danger of drug interactions and side effects could increase.<sup>5</sup>

Globally, self-medication has been reported as being on the rise. In developing countries people are not only using non-prescription drugs but also prescription drugs, as self-medication products, without supervision. The World Health Organization has emphasized that self-medication must be correctly taught and controlled.<sup>6</sup> Responsible self-medication, which is limited to over the counter (OTC) drugs, may generate considerable net benefit flows to economies through saving in travel and session time and the direct financial cost of treatment. Self-medication can help treat minor ailments that do not require medical consultation and hence reduce the pressure on medical services particularly in the deprived countries with inadequate health care resources.<sup>7</sup>

Pankaj Gupta et al, conducted a cross sectional study in an urban slum community in India in year 2011, to assess the prevalence and practice of self-medication and its major determinants. The study was conducted among one representative member of each of the 760 households in an urban slum community. The data was collected by systemic random sampling through pre-test, semi-structure questionnaire survey form. The result concluded that increase pattern of self-medication were found in female, young age group, low economic and education population which were 55.9%.<sup>8</sup>

Studies revealed that there is an increase in trends of self-medications particularly among the youth. This can be attributed to socio-economic factors, life style, ready access to drugs, the increased potential to manage certain illnesses through self-care, and greater availability of medicinal products, socio-demographic, epidemiological, availability of healthcare and health professional, law, society and exposure to advertisement; high level of education and professional status. Moreover, knowledge of drugs and their use are the main causes of self-medication especially among pharmacists and physicians.<sup>9</sup>

Nowadays people are keen to accept more personal responsibility for their health status and to obtain as much sound information as possible from expert sources in order to help them make appropriate decisions in health care. Moreover, the internet is emerging as a major source of information on health issues and (with appropriate control) offers great promise in helping people with self-care. In developing countries, both modern drugs and traditional medicines are commonly used for self-medication<sup>10</sup>.

Drug manufacturers have not helped matters as their chief concern is to promote the sale of their medicines without giving adequate information to the public on such drug if possible in the local language. This is compounded by high illiteracy level, poverty and inadequate health facilities and personnel. Self-medication offers a way out as people begin to sense the positive benefits of multiplying their options in health care. In the developed countries with sufficient health manpower, many people still buy non-dangerous medications without a doctor's prescription<sup>11</sup>.

## Materials and Methods

The evaluative approach was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select samples and sample size was 100 nursing students those who are studying in 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year, and internship. The study was conducted in Ganpatrao Adke institute of Nursing, Dwarka circle Nashik. The study was conducted in 6 weeks. Structured questionnaire developed by the researcher would be used to collect data from nursing students. Data would be analyzed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. The sampling approach is found to be appropriate to select students studying in Ganpatrao Adke Institute of Nursing, Nashik. Sample size selected for this study was 100 samples. Only that who fulfilled the sampling criteria and who expressed willingness to participate in the study was selected.

## Results

Demographic characteristics were shown in Table 1 that highest percentage i.e. 47% of student in the age group of 18 to 20 years and 88% of students were female. 76% of students were from urban area. 35% take self medication due to quick relief. 71% take self medication in minor illness. 38% take self medication for fever. 69% received information from medical professional. 73% students take medication from medical store. 46% students take allopathic drugs for self medication. 44% students take analgesics drugs. 44% students take medication once a week. 44% students take medication till relief from symptoms. It was found that there is no significant association between the knowledge score and variables. It was found that there was significant association in the variable like gender ( $\chi^2=5.12$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) other than these there was no significant association found in other variable.

**Table 1: Demographic profile of the study population**

	<b>Demographic profile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>	18-20 yrs	47	47%
	21-22 yrs	41	41%
	23-24 yrs	10	10%
	24 yrs and above	2	2%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	12	12%
	Female	88	88%
<b>Family income</b>	Below 10,000	24	24%
	10,001-20,000	20	20%
	20,001-30,000	24	24%
	Above 30,000	32	32%
<b>Residence</b>	Rural	24	24%
	Urban	76	76%
<b>Reason of Medicine</b>	Highest consultant fees	17	17%
	Busy schedule	21	21%
	Quick relief	35	35%
	Having knowledge about self medication	27	27%
<b>Types of Illnes</b>	Minor illness	71	71%
	Major illness	6	6%
	Both conditions	23	23%
<b>Frequency of Self medication in Illness</b>	Headache	37	37%
	Cough	8	8%
	Fever	38	38%
	Pain	17	17%
<b>Source of Information about Drug</b>	Medical professionals	69	69%
	Chemist	6	6%
	Friends	13	13%
	Books	12	12%
<b>Source of medication</b>	Hospital	46	46%
	Medical stores	31	31%
	Family members	23	23%
	Others	—	—
<b>System of medicine</b>	Allopathic	46	46%
	Homeopathic	31	31%
	Ayurveda	23	23%
	Other	—	—
<b>Type of Drug used</b>	sedatives	10	10%
	Analgesics	44	44%
	Antibiotics	31	31%
	Antipyretics	15	15%
<b>Frequency of self medication</b>	Once a week	44	44%
	Twice a week	13	13%
	Once a month	28	28%
	Twice a month	15	15%
<b>Course of medication</b>	Complete course	23	23%
	Single course	33	33%
	Till the relief from symptoms	44	44%

## Discussion

A descriptive cross sectional survey design was used to collect data from 100 students to assess the prevalence and awareness regarding the self medication on health by using questionnaire. This study was undertaken in the Ganpatrao Adke institute of nursing Nasik. Collected data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in the form of tables and diagrams. The findings revealed that there was no significant association between awareness and demographic variable. In finding students are using more allopathic drugs than other drugs. Most of student using self medication with there professional knowledge. Most of drugs are used for the minor health problems like common cold, headache, fever, pain. The study findings revealed that there was significant association in the variable like gender( $\chi^2=5.12$ ,  $P<0.05$ ) other than these there was no significant association found in the other variable.

## Conclusion

From the findings it can be concluded that the prevalence of self medication is high among the undergraduate nursing students and level of awareness was less among the students. The factor responsible for the students for self medication is quick relief from minor illness such as headache, fever, pain and information source is due to medical profession.

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