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Research Article

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Self-Medications in a Rural Community

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ABSTRACT

Background: The consumption of drugs without consulting healthcare professional regardless of side effects and duration of therapy is known as self-medication. This study was conducted to analyze the practice of self-medication and knowledge about the medicines among the common people of rural areas.

Methods: 6 months Study was carried out by collecting the data with the help of questionnaire and thereby collecting their answers. The data was analyzed statistically in terms of actual numbers and percentage.

Results: As an outcome of our survey, majority of the population were unaware about proper usage of medicines. The survey also shows that NSAIDs are the most consumed medicines. 72.11% stop taking medications without the advice or without informing healthcare provider. 77.56% believe medication without prescription will help them.

Conclusion: The survey that most of the common population in the rural areas don't know about the indication for which they are taking medication and the study also emphasizes the unawareness of common population towards proper usage of medication. Elderly people are on polypharmacy due to multiple and inter current diseases, with their improper use due to lack of knowledge of correct dose, side effects, and interactions would bring serious implications. Community pharmacists should get continuous education and repeated training programs because they are easy accessible to the common population. A proper statutory drug control must be implemented, rationally restricting the availability of drugs to the public. Self-medication is an area where governments and health authorities need to ensure that it is done in a responsible manner, ensuring that safe drugs are made available over the counter and the consumer is given adequate information about the use of drugs and when to consult a doctor.

Keywords: Self-medication, irrational use, prevalence, pharmacist, drugs.

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INTRODUCTION:

Medicine is considered as one of the important necessity for all of us. Modern medicines have changed the way in which diseases are managed and controlled. Despite all beneficial use of medicine, evidence continues to mount that adverse reaction to medicine, yet often preventable, cause of illness, disability and even death. Improper use of medicine may cause potential health hazards. The concept of self-medication which encourages a person to look after minor ailments with simple and effective remedies has been adopted worldwide. Unsupervised self-medication places patient at risk for medication misuse. Patient self-

medication may also bring out dangerous drug- drug and drug- disease interactions. Hence, public knowledge, attitudes and practice regarding the use of medicine influence the decision to seek health care, the use of medicines and finally the success of treatment. Although there is an extensive literature on patient's medication adherence, much less attention has been paid to their ideas about medication. ¹

Most of the epidemiological data shows that India is a country where diseases are more prevalent. Diseases must be treated or cured only by using proper medicines with proper usage. If prescribed medicines are appropriate to

treat the diseases, but if they are not taken properly then it will again lead to harm instead of curing the disease. Consumers learn about the effect of drugs depending on their physical well-being after they have taken it due to remedy a certain ailment. Drugs taken to treat non-chronic ailments are typically used up or discarded after the patient recovers or when the patient has switched it for another drug because the first drug did not work satisfactorily. This observation allows the conjecture that the recurrent use of a drug creates a learning opportunity at each purchase occasion based on the consumer's perception of the drug.⁴

Over the counter (OTC) medications are drugs which have been found to be safe and appropriate for use without the supervision of a health care professional such as a physician, and they can be purchased by consumers without a prescription. In developing countries like India most of the illnesses are treated by self-medication because of easy availability of a wide range of drugs commercially coupled with inadequate health services result in increased proportions of drugs used as self-medication compared to prescribed drug. Although, OTC (over the counter) drugs are meant for self-medication and are of proved efficacy and safety, their improper use due to lack of knowledge of correct dose, side effects, and interactions could have serious implications, especially in extremes of ages (children and old age) and special physiological conditions like pregnancy.⁵

METHODOLOGY:

Study Design:

This study is commonly based observational and prospective study.

Study Site:

Kogilu and Venkatala villages near to Yelahanka.

Study Period:

This study was conducted over a period of six months from November 2018 to April 2019.

Study Approval:

This study was approved by Institutional Ethical Committee.

Study Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Those who have purchased or used the drugs.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Individuals who are not willing to participate in the survey.

Source of Data:

Patient Data relevant to the study was obtained from patient prescriptions, medicine strips and bills.

Study Materials:

- Feedback form.
- Patient information leaflets (PILS).
- Patient prescriptions.
- Medicine strips.

Method of Collection of Data:

Data will be collected according to the data collection form, from the people in the said villages.

Statistical Analysis:

The study data was analyzed by using statistics such as mean, average and percentages.

Study Procedure:

The clinical pharmacists visited to the selected houses in the villages and introduce him/her with subjects. Then the clinical pharmacists interact with the village people and assessed their knowledge and attitude towards the medications and collected data according to the questionnaire prepared. Demographic details of the patient, drug and disease details also collected.

RESULTS:

According to the study the total number of sample was 312. The table: 1 shows that in the sample 228 were males and 84 were female. Figure 1 shows distribution of gender among study population and shows that there are 73.07% males and 26.93% females.

Table 2 and figure 2 show the response of study population towards the questionnaire. It shows that, 79.48% of the study populations are using medication. 79.48% know about for what disease they are taking medicines. 77.56% believe medication without prescription will help them. 30.44% know for how long they have to take medication. 72.11% will stop medication when they feel better. 73.71% females know how to manage if they miss a dose. 12.82% felt side effects after taking medications. 78.20% remember to take medications on time every day. 70.51% stop taking medications without the advice or without informing healthcare provider. Only 64.74% know how to store medication properly.

Table 3 and figure 3 show the various classes of medicines which are used by the study population. It shows that NSAIDs are mostly used medicines among the study population. 132 peoples were using NSAIDs (42.30%). 122 (39.10%) were using anti hypertensives and 112 (35.89%) were using anti diabetics.

Table 4 and figure 4 shows the age wise distribution of the study population. Highest group was above 50 years of age.

DISCUSSION:

Most of the epidemiological data shows that India is a country where diseases are more prevalent. Diseases must be treated or cured only by using proper medicines with proper usage. If prescribed medicines are appropriate to treat the diseases, but if they are not taken properly then it will again lead to harm instead of curing the disease. Most of the common populations believe that OTC medications are safer and are devoid of unwanted side effects. Over the counter medications are safer and effective only when they are used accordingly following the instruction patterns. It should be used with precaution for different age groups such as pediatric, pregnant women and geriatric people. In this new era, current medication has changed the approach in which diseases are managed and controlled. Patient's unusual drug use may bring about dangerous drug - drug and drug - disease interactions.

Table 1: Distribution of Gender among Study Population

Distribution of Gender		
Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	228	73.07%
Female	84	26.93%
Total	312	100%

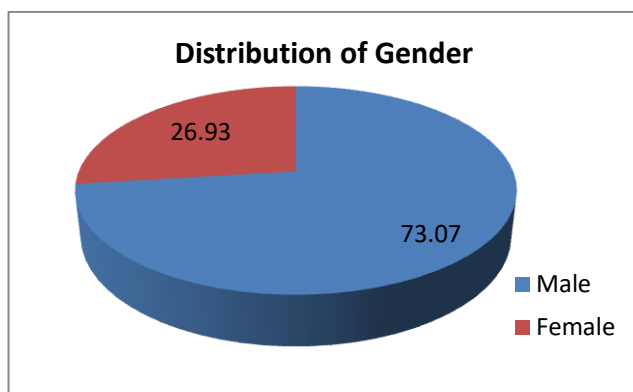


Figure 1:

Table 2: Response of study population towards questionnaire

Questions	Yes		No	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Q.1	248	79.48%	64	20.52%
Q.2	248	79.48%	64	20.52%
Q.3	242	77.56%	70	22.44%
Q.4	95	30.44%	217	69.56%
Q.5	225	72.11%	87	27.89%
Q.6	230	73.71%	82	26.29%
Q.7	40	12.82%	272	87.18%
Q.8	244	78.20%	68	21.80%
Q.9	220	70.51%	92	29.49%
Q.10	202	64.74%	110	35.26%

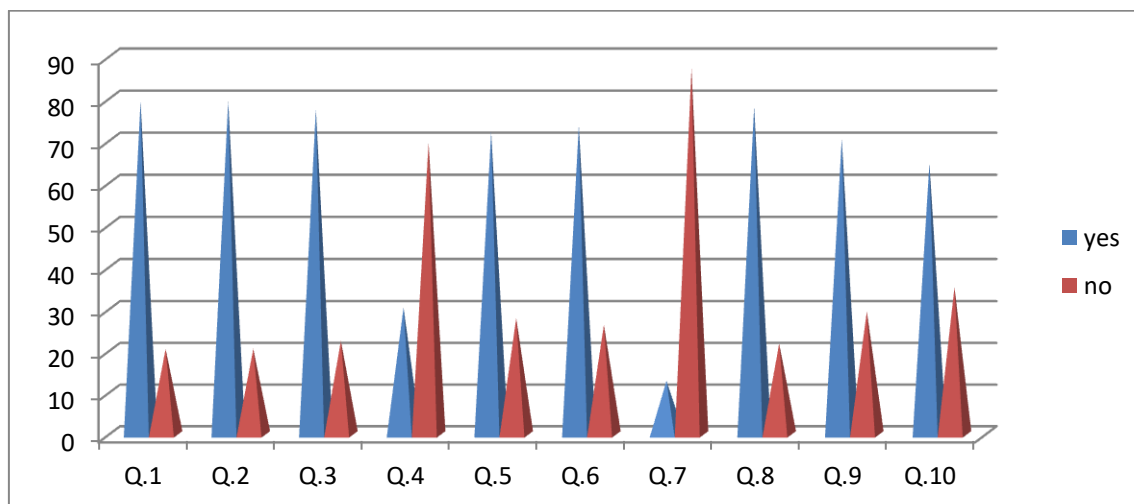


Figure 2:

Table 3: Drugs Used in Study Population

Q11. Drugs classification	Number of people using	Percentage of people using
NSAIDS	132	42.30%
Anti ulcer drugs	86	27.56%
Anti emetics	12	3.84%
Antihypertensive	122	39.10%
Anti diabetics	112	35.89%
Anti-asthmatics	42	13.46%
Others	108	34.61%

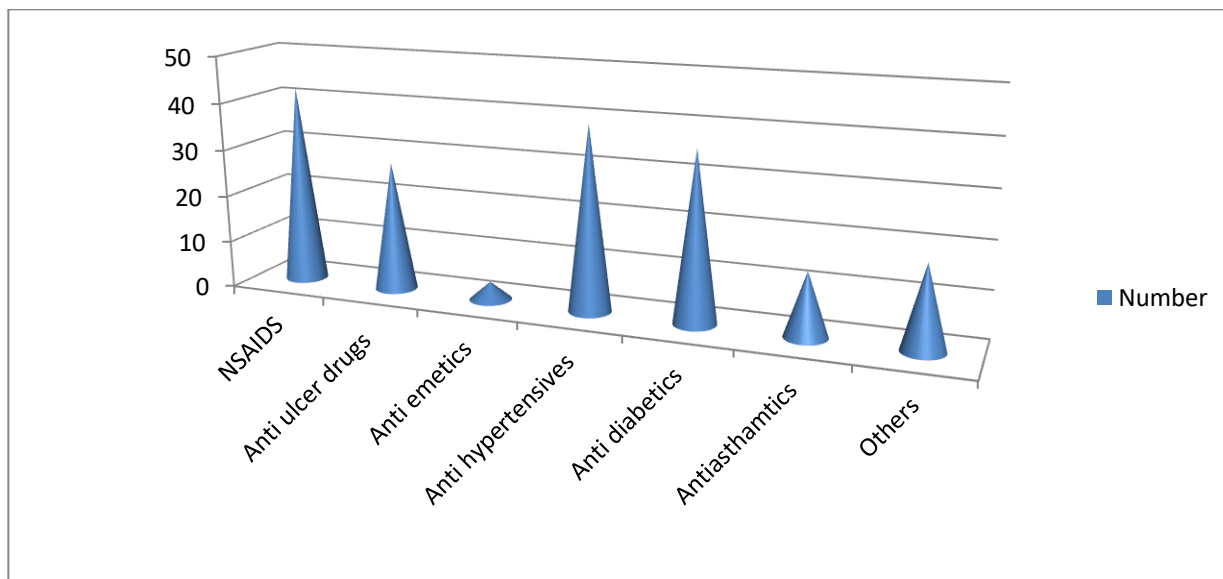


Figure 3:

Table 4: Age Group

Age Group	Number
Below 20	26
21-30	48
31-40	60
41-50	66
Above 50	112

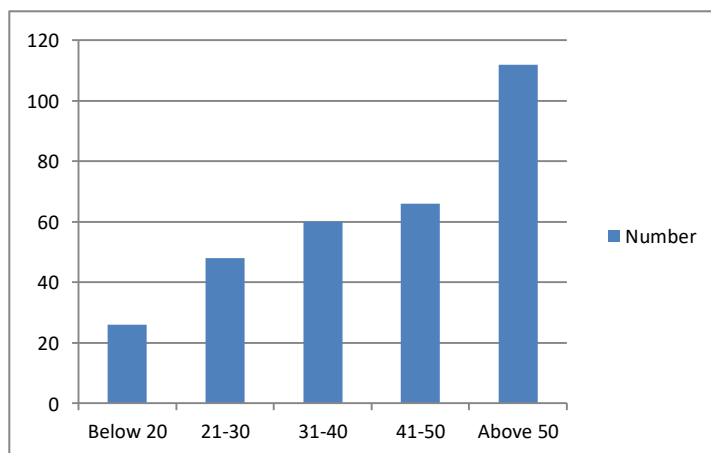


Figure 4: Age Group

In our study, we included 312 subjects, among them 73.07% were males and 26.93% were females. In accordance to our study we designed 12 questions. From the data collected, 79.48% were using medicines. From the data, only 79.48% know for what diseases they are taking medicines. Most of them (77.56%) believe medication without prescription will help them. Poor response has been noted that for how long medication has to be taken, i.e. 30.44%. From the data, 72.11% were stopping the medication when they feel better. Only 73.71% will continue their medication until the course will complete. 73.71% know how to manage if they missed a dose. From the data 12.82% felt side effects after taking medication such as headache, nausea and GI related problems. According to the data 78.20% people remember to take medication in time every day and 21.80% forget to take medication on time every day and they usually miss the doses. Males were more prone to miss dose. From data, 70.51% stopped taking medication without the advice or without informing healthcare provider. From data only 64.74% of people know how to store medication properly.

As an outcome of our survey, majority of the population were unaware about proper usage of medicines. It brings various risks when these medicines are not taken accordingly. Since most of the population have taken medications, directly from the community pharmacy only, which shows there is greater chance and opportunity for pharmacists to provide efficient professional guidance for safe and appropriate OTC use.

CONCLUSION:

The survey that most of the common population in the rural areas don't know about the indication for which they are taking medication and the study also emphasizes the unawareness of common population towards proper usage of medication. Elderly people are on polypharmacy due to multiple and inter current diseases, with their improper use due to lack of knowledge of correct dose, side effects, and interactions would bring serious implications. Over the past 50 years, it has become clear that it is not just the drug, but the way in which a drug is used that influences both its effectiveness and its potential for harm. It is an opportunity for pharmacists to use their professional training in more clinical ways. Pharmacists play a key role in providing information about OTC medications to the patient. Information technology will play a fundamental part in helping pharmacists to provide new services. Community pharmacists should get continuous education and repeated training programmes because they are easy accessible to the common population. A pharmacist can conduct a Home Medicine Review (HMR) by visiting patients in their own home to identify and help resolve any medication related problems.

Major issues related to self-usage is wastage of medicines, increased resistance of pathogens and generally entails serious health hazards such as adverse reaction and prolonged suffering. A proper statutory drug control must be implemented, rationally restricting the availability of drugs to the public. Self-medication is an area where governments and health authorities need to ensure that it

is done in a responsible manner, ensuring that safe drugs are made available over the counter and the consumer is given adequate information about the use of drugs and when to consult a doctor.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: There are no conflicts of interest.

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