

Knowledge, attitude, practices, and associated factors on self-medication among final year non-health related undergraduates in the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

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Background: Self-medication practice (SMP) is a global crisis that requires global awareness all over the world. Besides, the practice of self-medication (SM) among university undergraduates is notably high. The attitude towards SM among undergraduates can vary significantly based on cultural, social, and individual factors.

Objective: To assess the knowledge, attitudes, practices, and associated factors on self-medication among Final Year Non-Health related Undergraduates in the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among randomly selected 349 final-year non-health-related undergraduates from UOC, Sri Lanka. Data on socio-demographics, knowledge, attitudes, practices, and associated factors relevant to SM was gathered using a validated and pre-tested self-administered questionnaire. After obtaining ethical approval from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, data was collected and analyzed by Descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Around 63% of the study sample denoted an SM behavior. Among them, the majority were Science faculty undergraduates (n=56, 25.45%). Antipyretics (86.8%) and drugs for cough and the common cold (65.6%) were the most commonly reported types of medications consumed, which were obtained from pharmacies most frequently. Headaches and migraines (86.8%) were the major ailments for practicing SM among them. The urgency of problems (72.5%) and previous experience (65.3%) were the most common reasons for SM. Most of the undergraduates had good (49%) and moderate (35%) levels of knowledge with positive attitudes. There is a significant association between gender (p=0.002), selected faculties (p<0.001), and family member enrollment in the health care setting (p=0.005) with the mean knowledge of the study participants.

Conclusion: The knowledge and attitudes are moderately satisfactory but the practices on SM are unsatisfactory. University-based interventions such as awareness programs must be implemented to remedy this situation.

Keywords: *Self Medication, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Final year undergraduates*