

A Study of Self-Medication practices among the population of Satara City in western Maharashtra

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0.0Abstract:

Self-Medication can be defined as obtaining and consuming drugs without the advice of a physician either for diagnosis, prescription. Self-medication can also be termed as medication taken on the patient's own initiative or on the advice of pharmacist or any other layperson. In developing countries, most of the illnesses are treated by self-medication. When we consider this definition it is essential that effective drug treatment requires patient compliance and consultation with a medical professional together with close follow-up, conditions rarely attained. According to WHO, health is defined as state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity. The dialogue that occurs between the patient and health care provider often is telling and listening. Unfortunately, there is not a sequence followed by telling and knowing & knowing and doing. Patients take information and process it with their own cognitive framework, which is based upon their interpretation of their own experiences and henceforth start doing self-medication. In 1995 the WHO Expert Committee on National Drug policies stated: "Self-medication is widely practiced in both developed and developing countries. Medications may be approved as being safe for self-medication by the national drug regulatory authority. Such medicines are normally used for the prevention or treatment of minor ailments or symptoms, which do not justify medical consultation. In some chronic or recurring illnesses, after initial diagnosis and prescription, self-medication is possible with the doctor retaining an advisory role. The prescription drugs are readily available along with OTC drugs without prescription at nearest medical store. Along with this time and other cost involved leading to self-medication in urban and semi-urban areas of Indian cities. Drugs without prescription are consumed for varied reasons, with or without knowledge of side effect profile and dosage regime.

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1.0 Introduction:

Self-Medication can be defined as obtaining and consuming drugs without the advice of a physician either for diagnosis, prescription. Self-medication can also be termed as medication taken on the patient's own initiative or on the advice of pharmacist or any other lay person. In developing countries, most of the illnesses are treated by self-medication. When we consider this definition it is essential that effective drug treatment requires patient compliance and consultation with a medical professional together with close follow-up, conditions rarely attained. According to WHO, health is defined as state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity. The dialogue that occurs between the patient and health care provider often is telling and listening. Unfortunately, there is not a sequence followed by telling and knowing & knowing and doing. Patients take information and process it with their own cognitive framework, which is based upon their interpretation of their own experiences and henceforth start doing self-medication. It is one of the leading causes for the ever threatening drug resistance for various antimicrobials. Oral request or old prescription is used by member of general public to acquire the prescription drugs. All this may lead to drug resistance, drug interactions, and adverse reactions if medications not used according to the instructions given by physicians or accompanying the drug.

In India Self-medication is considered as easy, cheaper and hassle-free alternative. When compared to visiting the physician temporary relief which is economical, chosen as convenient option by general public. The danger associated with this self-medication is totally ignored. Recent studies done by Dr SG Deshpande and Dr R Tiwari from the department of preventive and social medicine, Government Medical College, Nagpur, indicate that 31 per cent Indians practised self-medication; about 26.9 per cent of them are in the age group of 31 to 40 and 30.8 per cent between 41 and 50 years.

Objective:

- 1) To study the self-medication practices among the population of Satara city in Maharashtra.
- 2) To study the reasons and sources for self-medication.

Scope:

The study is based on the survey of customers visiting medical stores in Satara city of western Maharashtra. The group of customer who came to purchase drugs without prescriptions during the study period was the targets of the study. The analysis however takes into consideration the research papers & surveys from all over the world.

Methodology:

A questionnaire with multiple choice questions was designed to obtain our data with 10 questions about self-medication habits, which was answered by the respondents during his/ her visit to medical stores. The group of customer who came to purchase drugs without prescriptions during the study period was the targets of the study. Data was collected via face to face interview of customers who visited medical stores. The study was conducted from November 2013 to December 2013 at medical stores in Satara city. The questionnaire used for data collection consisted of two sections with a total 16 questions. The A section included questions on intention to self-medication with over the counter drugs and prescription drugs. The intention to self-medication with over the counter drugs was determined with questions: The B section included questions on the personal descriptive information (age, sex, marital status, education level & occupations). The interviews conducted by one person, lasted approximately 10 - 15 min. The objective of the study, confidentiality of the research and other ethical considerations were explained to respondents prior to interview. Prior permission was taken from medical store's owners was taken to conduct the interview's. As the study is about public at large and person involved in health profession like physicians, pharmacist, nurses and other paramedical are excluded as they have different level of knowledge of drugs which will affect the results in overall, hence excluded from the study.

- **Population**

The customers visiting medical stores to purchase drugs without prescription was selected from Satara city.

- **Sample size**

To study the whole universe is highly impossible therefore researcher decided to select 60 customers visiting 10 selected medical stores from Satara city.

- **Source of data**

- Primary data-Primary data was collected through questionnaire and interview method from customers visiting medical stores to purchase drugs without prescription.
- Secondary data-Data collected from medical journals, publications, websites, WHO publications, promotional literature /material of drug companies, notification issued by regulatory bodies; document procured from government agencies. Information is also collected from films and related publications by non-government organizations and groups from India and other countries.

1.1 Self-medication practice and its implication:

(a)Self-medication practice:

Medicines for self-medication are often called ‘nonprescription’ or ‘over-the-counter’ (OTC) medicines, and are easily available, the biggest question everyone has is: “Do I have to go to the doctor?” Dr Nalin Nag, consultant in internal medicine at New Delhi’s Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, points out that we are overmedicated “There are just too many over-the-counter (OTC) medicines available at the discretion of the naïve public,” Further he indicate that “Many people consider self-treatment an easy, cheaper and hassle-free alternative to visiting the doctor”. Any temporary relief they find only reinforces this habit. Dangers are ignored blatantly the growing dependence and spiraling usage of over-the-counter drugs or self-medication is of serious concern. As Dr Amit Aggarwal, director of New Delhi’s Bhagwati Hospital, says, “Although mostly people do just fine, self-diagnosis and self-treatment can only go so far and can have serious repercussions.” Doctors agree that self-medication is increasing and is here to stay. They see this as a positive development and support the practice of giving ordinary citizens a chance to take greater responsibility for their health. In fact, the World Medical Association has publicly supported global moves towards self-medication, but has also warned about the dangers of patients being misled by inaccurate information. “The problem is that you, as the consumer, have no way to judge the efficacy of a drug or its hazards and many potent drugs are freely available. Also banned drugs such as anlagen, phenylbutazone and Lomotil are still sold unchecked,” informs Dr Nag.

It is observed that along with OTC drugs prescription drugs are also available for member of general public without any prescription. The prescription drugs are sold without prescription on oral request by customer or on old prescription presented by customer to pharmacist. Pharmacist sells this prescription drug to customer without prescription as business interest is involved. Some of these drugs may lead to life threatening condition if not consumed according to dosage mentioned. Dosage directions, drug interaction, contraindications, and are totally ignored by consumers.

(b)Risk associated with self-medication:

As large number of potent drugs for e.g. pain relievers, cough remedies, anti-allergic, laxatives, antibiotics, antacids and vitamins is readily available over-the-counter (OTC).All this result into Self-medication with OTC medicationthe dangers of self-medication include misdiagnosing the illness, habituation allergic reactions insufficient dosage risk of stroke drug interactions self-medication by pregnant women:This could adversely affect the unborn child causing congenital anomalies and birth defects. Unlike other facets of self-care, self-medication involves the intake of drugs, which have the potential to be beneficial or harmful. Their improper use can have serious health implications, especially among children, the aged, and in people with special physiological conditions such as pregnancy and lactation. The government and health authorities must ensure that only safe drugs are made available OTC. Consumers should be given adequate information about their use.

Analysis and Findings:**Results****Table 1.1****Demographic data of the respondents**

Demography	Number (n=60)	Percentage (%)
SEX		
Male	46	76.66
Female	14	23.33
AGE		
18- 26	16	26.66
27-38	25	41.66
39-50	17	28.33
51 and Above	02	3.33
EDUCATION		
Nil	02	3.33
Primary School	08	13.33
SSC and HSC	16	26.66
Graduation and Higher education	34	56.66

Table 1.2**Condition for which Self-medication Used**

Condition	User (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Headache	8	13.33
Fever	9	15
Constipation/Abdominal Pain	1	1.66
Diarrhoea	1	1.66
Cough/cold	15	25
Acidity	6	10
Joint/Back pain	9	15
Nausea/Vomiting	1	1.66
Skin problem	3	5
Allergies	3	5
Toothache	2	3.33
To improve Immunity (Antioxidant/Tonics/Hematinic)	2	3.33

Table 1.3**Reasons for Self-medication**

Reason	Number of respondent (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Financial constraint associated with visit to Physician	06	10
Time constraint associated with visit to Physician	25	41.66
Common/Minor Health issue	20	33.33
Confidence resulting from previous usage of medication.	05	8.33
Other	04	6.66

Table1.4

Informationonusage of drug	Number of respondent (n=60)		Percentage (%)	
	YES	NO	YES	NO
Dosage information	15	35	25	75
Contraindications	0	60	0	100

Adverse reaction after use	5	55	8.30	91.70
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Table 1.5

Selection of medication based on	Number of respondent (n=60)	Percentage (%)
Recommendation by pharmacist	12	20
Information obtained on internet	1	1.66
Opinion of family member/friend	12	20
Previous prescription by physician	9	15
Advertisement	6	10
Own experience	20	33.33

Conclusion: The result of the study indicate that self-medication practice in Satara city are in line with the general self-medication trends observed in urban to semi-urban areas in Maharashtra state. One important reason behind self-medication is time constraint associated with visit to physician. Medical conditions and drugs used to treat them may vary according to changing weather condition at that particular time of the year. Self-medication is more prevalent among young and middle age group. Although Convenient and cost effective self-medication may lead to life threatening condition if not used according to the instruction given with the drug. So there is need to create awareness about the cautious use of drugs among the users to ensure the health and well-being.

Figure 1:

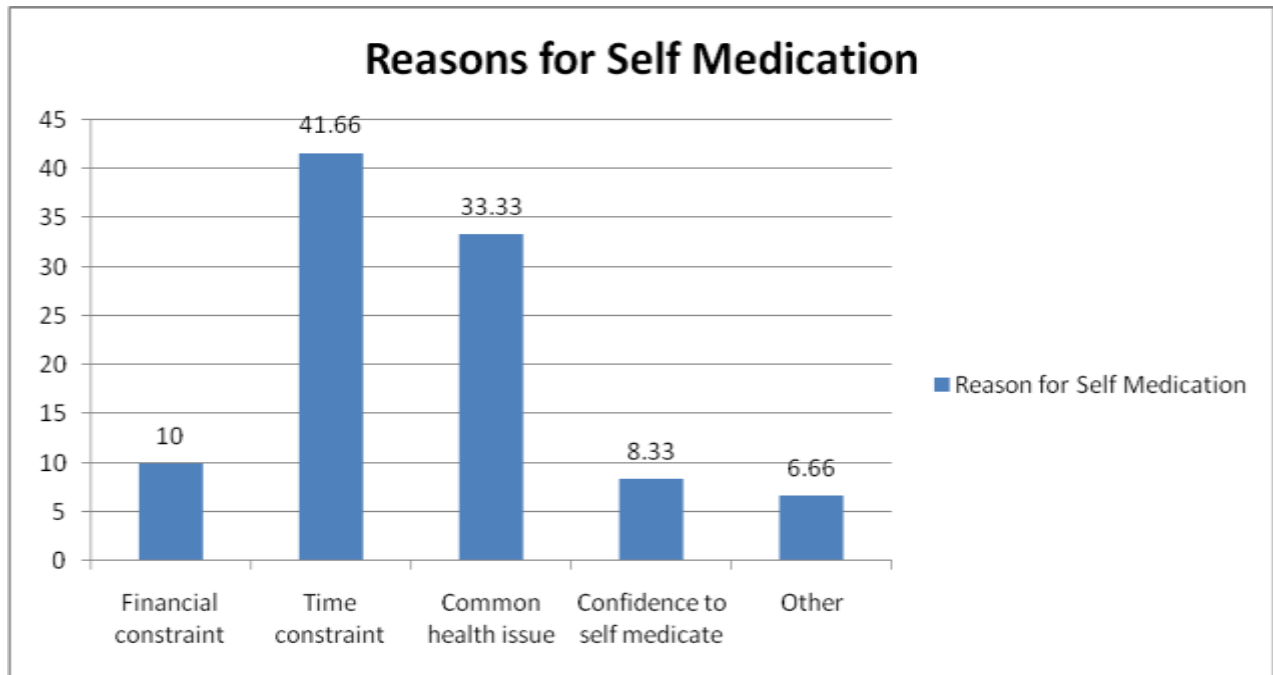


Figure 2:

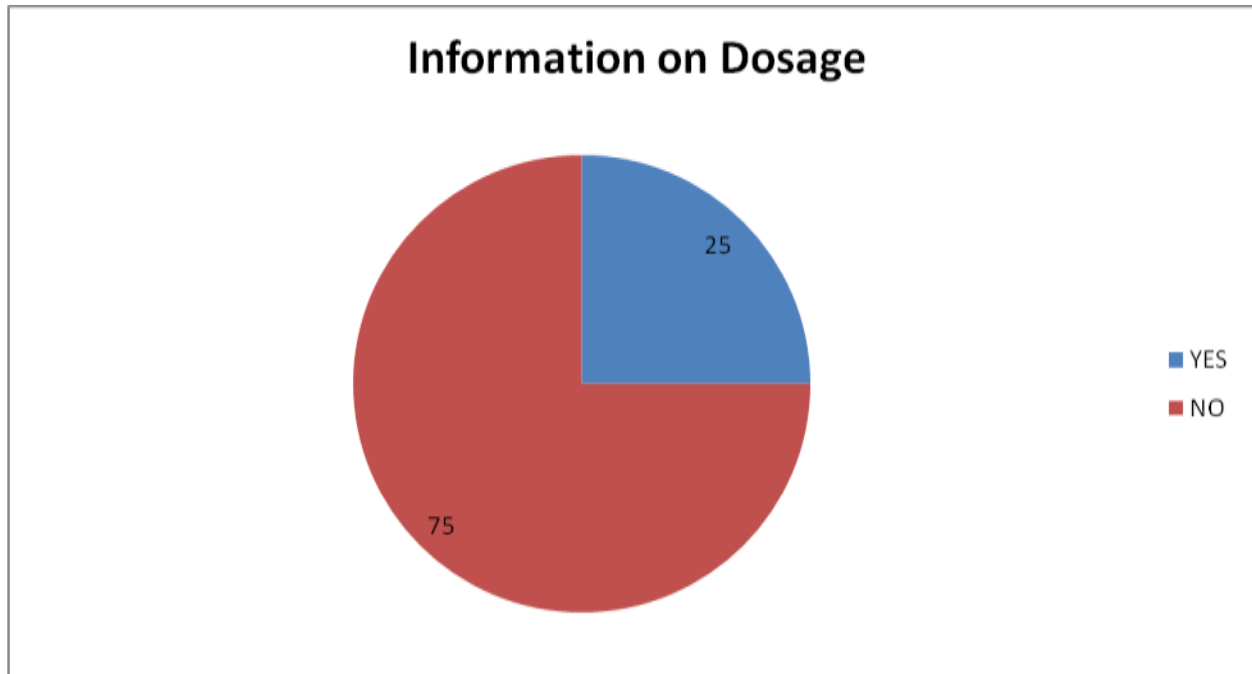
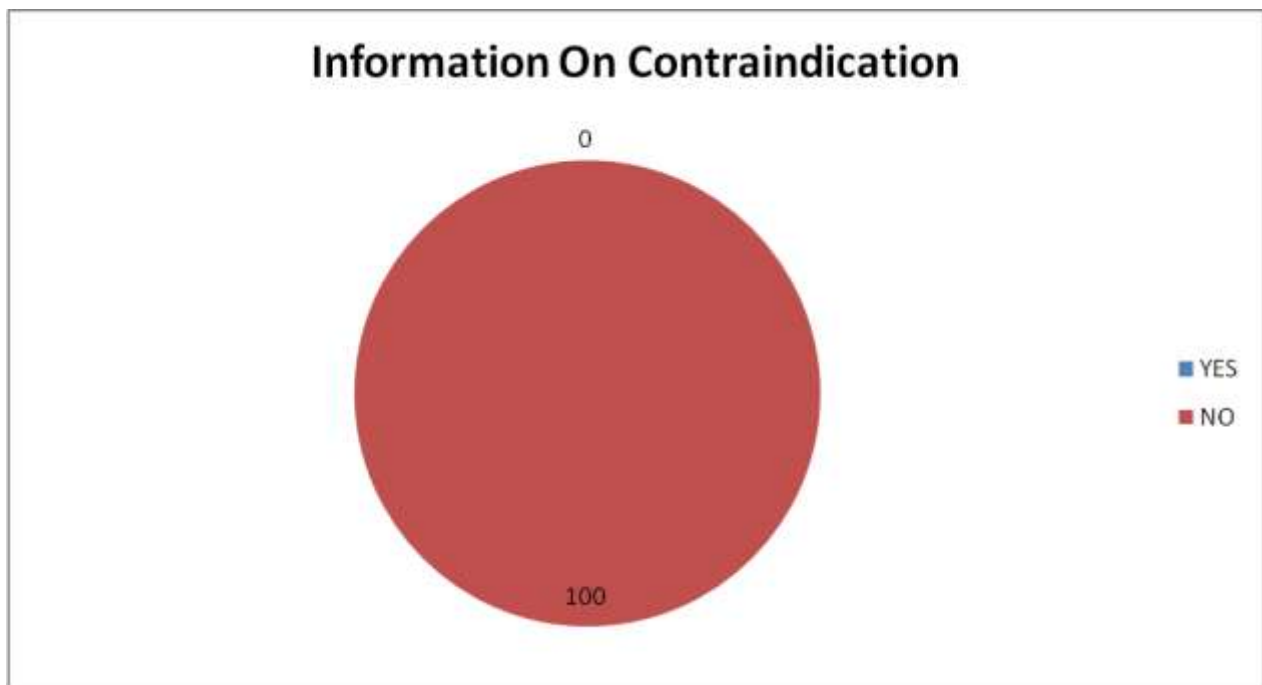
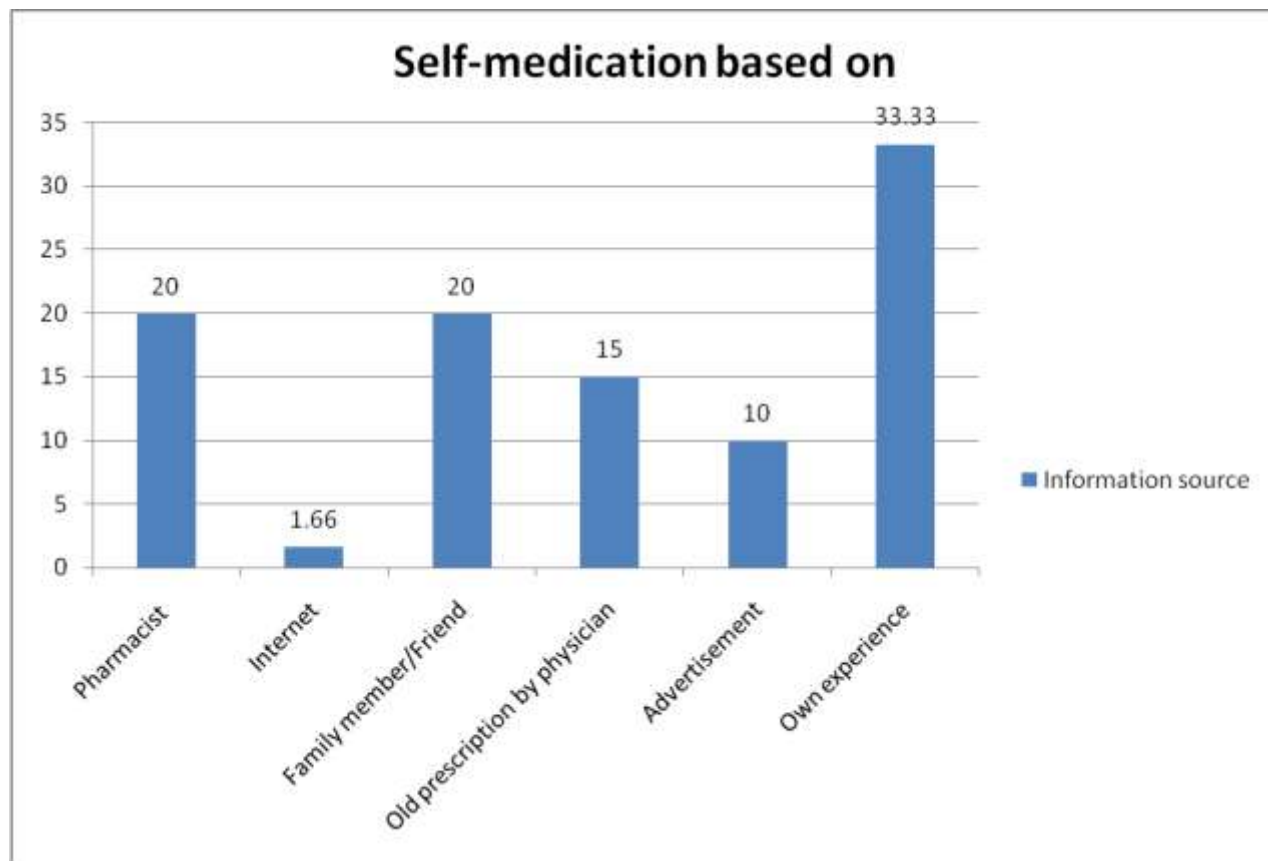


Figure 3:



Figure**4:****Reference:**

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