

A Glance from Inside at the Pattern of Self-medication among Secondary School Students in Baghdad, Iraq

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to assess the prevalence, factors, and conditions linked to self-medication with drugs and dietary supplements among secondary school students. A randomized cohort cross-sectional study was carried out in two directorates in Baghdad. Participants were 604 secondary school students. A semi-structured, self-administered questionnaire was developed by the researchers, composed of questions related to the socio-demographic characteristics and the self-medication options. The overall prevalence of self-medication was 61.3%. The majority of participants practicing self-medication were girls (57.3%). Male gender, living in two-parent families, having a high parental educational level, and high standards of living were found to be protective factors. The most frequently used medications were analgesics (74.9%), whereas the most frequently used supplements were vitamins (38.9%). Family and pharmacist were the greatest sources of self-medication. The prevalence of self-medication among Iraqi secondary school students is high, particularly for analgesics, vitamins, and antibiotics. An urgent need to raise students' awareness regarding the appropriate use of medications and dietary supplements from reliable sources to control their use and prevent adverse effects.

Keywords: Self-medication, Adolescents, Secondary school students, Medicines, Iraq.

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