

Self-medication Knowledge Among Undergraduate Students in Al-Qalam University – Kirkuk- Iraq, 2019-2020

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ABSTRACT

Background: Over the counter (OTC) medications are used for self-treatment. Profoundly means the use of treatment without a prescription or specialist medical advice. Evaluation of related knowledge is essential to ensure optimal use of medicines.

Objectives: To demonstrate the knowledge of self-medication among undergraduate students at Al-Qalam University – Kirkuk- Iraq 2019-2020, and to find out the relationship between students' knowledge and their demographic data (age, gender, family income).

Methods: This descriptive study involved undergraduate students from 2019-2020 in Al-Qalam University- Kirkuk-Iraq. The sample size consisted of Fifty-nine students from the X-ray and Sonar Technique department from both genders. A questionnaire was constructed to focus on students' knowledge of self-medication and Over the counter (OTC) drugs. Data were collected from 1st October to 30th November 2019. The data were categorized by student age, gender, and family income. Measure of central tendency was used to analyze the data, and the hypothesis was tested using cross-tabulation to study the relationship among variables by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (V.21).

Results: The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants show that the age group (20-22) were the highest among study samples (N=59; 37%), (Mean = 2.45, SD= 1.91). The Mean score was utilized as a guideline for determining students' knowledge about self-medication. If the average score is greater than 3, it indicates a satisfying understanding of self-medication; otherwise, it indicates dissatisfaction. There was a significant association in items, related to multiple drugs are more effective than a single medication (χ^2 (12, N =59 = 22.132, $p < 0.05$), and item related to that more expensive medications are more effective (χ^2 (12, N =59 = 24.696, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, a significant association was found in items related to that the students were aware of the importance of reading the instruction (χ^2 (2, N =59 = 8.762, $p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Self-medication is common practice in the Iraqi community. The outcome of this study is to determine whether there is a need for awareness programs about self-medication for university students. The knowledge of undergraduate students at Al-Qalam University about self-medication is not satisfactory. They tend to use it correctly with little information, so it has become necessary to develop educational programs to increase the knowledge of the potential side effects of these non-prescription medications.

Keywords: Self-medication knowledge, Students' knowledge on self-medication, non-prescribed medications, Over-the-counter (OTC) medications

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