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A Cross-Sectional Study for Assessment of Dispensing Antibiotics without Prescriptions at Buraydah City's Community Pharmacies in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Background: The use of non-prescribed antibiotic has become a major health concern globally. This careless and casual use of antibiotics plays a decisive role in disseminating antimicrobial resistance. Apart from its implication on healthcare sector, it has burdened economics of many countries including Saudi Arabia. While the alarming situation of dispensing antibiotics without prescription has been reported for some regions of Saudi Arabia, but there is no specific report for the city of Buraydah. Thus, the current study was designed to elucidate the extent of this indiscriminate use of antibiotics in Buraydah region of Saudi Arabia.

Materials and methods: The data in the study was obtained by distributing validated self-administered questionnaire among 60 practicing pharmacists of Buraydah region during October 2014 to December 2014 with an assurance of maintaining confidentiality of their response. All the questions included in the questionnaire were prepared by the research team based on the targeted objective of the research.

Results: A vast majority of the respondents were bachelor degree holder (84%) with an experience of 5-10 years (41%) in this profession. Around 46% of the practicing Pharmacist express that they dispense only safe and effective antibiotics. However, some of them agree that there should be greater level of regulation or supervision to prevent rampant use of non-prescription antibiotics. Some of the respondents suggested for enhanced awareness programs, strong antibiotic dispensing policy, and clarification on OTC list to every pharmacies to prevent illicit use of antibiotics.

Conclusion: The small sample size and its confinement to Buraydah region was major limitation of the study. Nevertheless, it is a step forward to elucidate the prevalence of indiscriminate use of antibiotics across different regions of Saudi Arabia. To conclude, there is an urgent need to spread the awareness through appropriate channels on proper use of antibiotics.

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