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An Interventional Study to Modify the Practice, Knowledge, Awareness, and Attitude among University Students Regarding the Use of Antibiotics without Doctor's Prescription in UAE

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Background

Use of non-prescription drugs (NPD) among university students is a serious public health issue. A previous study has reported that generally, a sizeable proportion of consumers do not read the drug information leaflet (DIL) before using NPD. However, few studies have identified the risk associated with not reading drug information leaflet before using NPD. There are no extensive studies, which measured the prevalence and identified the risk associated with not reading DIL among university students. Therefore, we attempted to fill the gap in the literature.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey-based study was conducted from January to April 2014, among 2875 students in three randomly selected UAE universities. A structured and validated questionnaire was used to collect the responses of the students. SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data.

Results

More than half (1348; 57%) of participants reported using of oral NPD. Of 1348 participants reported using oral NPD, one quarter (1348; 22.2%) of Oral NPD was classified as incautious oral NPD usage as they did not read the DIL while using the medication for the first time. This study has identified 10 risk factors for incautious oral NPD use. Participants with age group of 21 years and older (OR=0.554, 95% CI: 0.373-0.823) ($p<0.001$), female (OR=0.339, 95% CI:0.236-0.486) ($p<0.001$), and students from medical schools (OR=0.619, 95% CI: 0.435-0.882, p value=0.008) had lower odds of being incautious users compared to lower age group, males and students from non-medical schools. Furthermore, participants with a polypharmacy behaviour had higher odds of being incautious Oral NPD user than monopharmacy users (OR=1.400, 95% CI: 1.030-1.02) ($p<0.001$).

Conclusion

There are few incautious Oral NPD use among university students, but it is a serious issue when it comes to medical students. There is a need for raising awareness among all medical students to motivate them to be cautious users because they are going to be the future healthcare providers. Further studies are required to explore other risk factors.

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