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"A Community Based Study to Assess Knowledge on OTC Medication and Its Use"

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ABSTRACT
Self-medication can be defined as obtaining and consuming one (or more) drug (s) without the advice of a physician either for diagnosis, prescription or surveillance of the treatment. The present study was an online survey aimed to analyze to assess knowledge of toxicity of OTC medication and use of OTC medication and their adverse reaction general public. A total of 127 participants participated in the survey. 77.16% were in the age range of 17-23 years & 22.84% were in the age above 23 years of both female 61.9% and male 38.58%. Majority of participants 74.01% were students, 24.4% workers and 1.5% others.

In order to analyze the use of OTC medication on frequency were enquired 85.7% take OTC medication whenever necessary, 10.5% weekly and 3.8% daily. The Majority 67.5% take OTC medication, 84.9% described OTC medication as drug without prescription and 13.5% for easily available drugs. The majority of 75.5% didn't know the side effects of OTC medication and 24.5% knew some of them.73.8% never experienced adverse effects from taking OTC medication, 9.5% have experienced and 16.7% are not sure of adverse effect experience.

The study shows a poor level of public knowledge regarding safety of medications and from this study its evident that the public underestimates the risk of the medications. It is of concern drug safety is being taken lightly. This has to be urgently addressed primarily by educational interventions. Thus, the present study would be useful in designing public educational interventions in improving drug safety, addressing the misconceptions and designing effective communication between healthcare professionals and the public so the appropriate sharing of information on side effects of prescribed alternative and OTC medication can be appropriately disseminated.

Keywords: Toxicity, over the counter, adverse drug reaction.

I. INTRODUCTION

At the present time, the use of OTC medication has been increased among the general public. There is evidence which suggest that overuse of OTC medication have led to many serious health issues. There are reported cases of adverse outcomes and even death [5]. Therefore, assessing the awareness about the increasing toxicity of OTC medication is necessary among general public. Data from the study will help to determine the current scenario of OTC use and toxicity which can further provide framework for necessary interventions.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the awareness of toxicity of OTC medications in general public.
- To assess the use of OTC medication and their adverse drug reaction.

II. METHODOLOGY

Study site: The study was an online survey which was conducted among the community.

Study design and sampling: The study was conducted through online survey using structured questionnaires to assess the knowledge and use of OTC medication among general public. The questionnaire was created, designed and disseminated using the Google Forms platform. Online questionnaire was posted through social media outlets (e.g., WhatsApp). Participants wereencouraged to fill out the form and assist in sharing the questionnaire with their family members, friends and relatives. Moreover, participants were limited to one response to avoid duplicated or exaggerated data.

Sample size: The study enrolled people during the time schedule allotted for the project including other circumstances.

Study Duration: The study will be conducted for a duration of one month from 2/03/2023 to 2/04/2023.

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Inclusion criteria: The participants willing to participate in the study.
Exclusion criteria: Incompletely filled questionnaire**.**
Methodology: An online survey was conducted with the help of questionnaire to collect the data from the to assess their knowledge about OTC medication. Articles werecollected from the online sources such as PUBMED and GOOGLESCHOLAR and questionnaires was prepared by using these articles. The data obtained from this survey was analyzed, assessed and interpreted. The results were presented in the form of frequency format with appropriate tabular forms and graph

METHOD OF COLLECTION OF DATA:
DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE
Data was collected through online surveys using structured questionnaires adapted from previous studies and modified to suit our purpose. Questionnaire was prepared in English language including all relevant variables based on the objectives of study.
The tools used are;

1. Socio-demographic characteristics
2. Knowledge
3. Practice of participants towards use of OTC medication.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS: Sample characteristics were computed in percentage/suitable and it is presented using tables and figures.

III. RESULT

The present study was aimed to assess knowledge of toxicity of OTC medication and use of OTC medication and their adverse reaction general public. A total of 127 participants participated in the survey. Socio-Demographic details shows that 77.16% were in the age range of 17-23 years & 22.84% were in the age above 23 years. 61.9% were female and 38.58% were male. Majority of participants 74.01% were students. The study also showed that 85.7% take OTC medication whenever necessary, 10.5% weekly and 3.8% daily.

Even though 84.9% described OTC medication as drug without prescription,15.1% defined OTC as “easily available drugs”. 75.5% were unaware of the side effects of OTC medication and 24.5% knew some of them.73.8% never experienced adverse effects from taking OTC medication, 9.5% have experienced and 16.7% are not sure of adverse effect experienced. Sources of information were assessed and it was found that 58.7% obtained information about OTC medication from their friends/family, 40% from social media and internet, 16.5% pharmacist and only 15% from physician.(Fig no. 1)

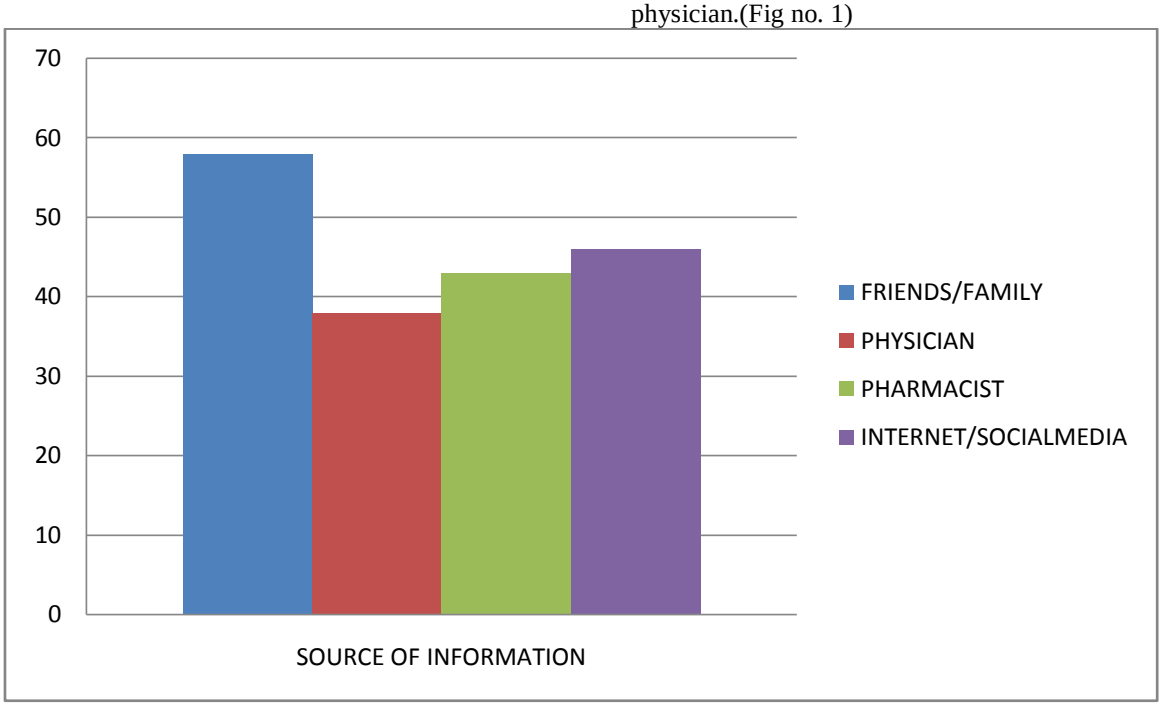

FIG. NO. 1: SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT OTC MEDICATION

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70.3% of respondents agree that it is safe to take OTC medications without discussing with healthcare professionals. It was found that 72.3% of respondents do not read the labels and instructions before taking OTC medications,7.8% do read and 9.9% read sometimes.(Fig.no.2)

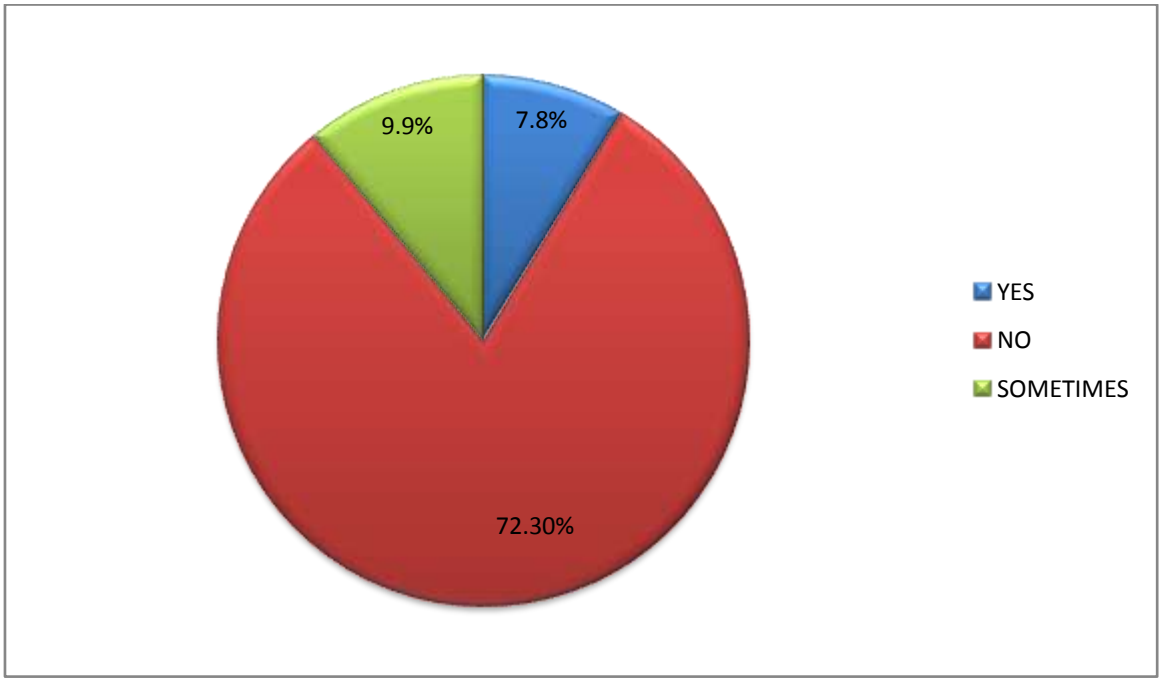

FIG.NO: 2: THOSE WHO READ LABEL BEFORE TAKING OTC MEDICATION

65.6% never discussed OTC medication use with health care professional, 20.1% discussed sometimes and only 14.3% discussed on OTC medication use before taking them. (Fig.no.3)

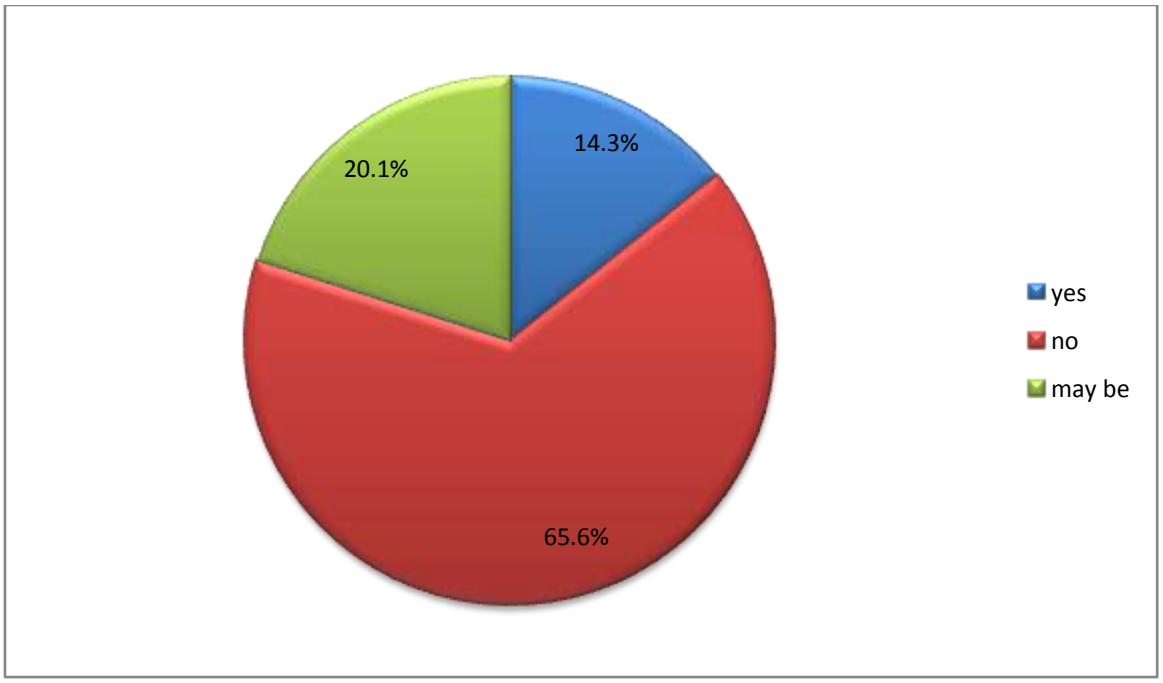

FIG.NO.3:DISCUSSED WITH HEALTHCARE PROFFESIONAL

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IV. DISCUSSION

The misuse andoveruse of OTC medication have led to many serious health issues. Therefore, assessing the use of OTC medication and their adverse drug reaction and assessing the awareness about the increasing toxicity of OTC medication is necessary among general public.In this study we included participants in the age range of 17-23 years & above 23 years . Majority of participants 77.16% were in the age range of 17-23 years & 22.84% were in the age above 23 years. The questions concerned about frequency of use, knowledge, practice as well as experience of side effects from OTC medication. 84.9% described OTC medication as drug without prescription and 15.1% for easily available drugs. The majority of 75.5% responders didn't know the side effects of OTC medication and most of 73.8% participants never experienced adverse effects from taking OTC medication, 9.5% have experienced and 16.7% are not sure of adverse effect experienced. Majority 58.7% obtained information about OTC medication from their friends/family, 40% from social media and internet, 16.5% pharmacist and only 15% from physician. Most of 72.3% respondents do not read the labels and instructions before taking OTC medications and 65.6% never discussed OTC medication use with health care professional and only 14.3% discussed on OTC medication use before taking them. 70.3% of respondents agree that it is safe to take OTC medications without discussing with healthcare professionals. This possesses as a serious concern because of the widespread and increasing use of alternative and OTC medicines among the public, as possible drug interactions and possibilities of the occurrence of ADRs are unknown as supported by the study Parsons S.[7] Public education on drug use should focus on effective communication in disseminating appropriate and timely information on the prescribed and non-prescribe medications.

FUTURE PROSPECTIVES

Our findings emphasize how the general public should be educated and increased awareness on use of OTC medication and their adverse drug reaction.

V. CONCLUSION

The study shows a poor level of public knowledge regarding safety of medications and from this study its evident that the public underestimates the risk of the medications. It is of concern drug safety is being taken lightly. Discovering the root cause of these issues leads to the fact that individuals do not get their information from healthcare professionals and are careless to discuss their OTC use with physicians or pharmacists. This has to be urgently addressed primarily by educational interventions. Thus, the present study would be useful in designing public educational interventions in improving drug safety, addressing the misconceptions and designing effective communication between healthcare professionals and the public so the appropriate sharing of information on side effects of prescribed alternative and OTC medication can be appropriately disseminated.

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