

Prevalence and Patterns of Self-Medication of Antibiotics among Medical, Allied Health Sciences and Non-Medical Students at General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University

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Self-medication with antibiotics is a major cause of concern as it leads to antibiotic resistance. This study aims to describe the prevalence, patterns and associated factors of antibiotic self-medication among medical, allied health and non-medical students in the 4th and 2nd years at the General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University (KDU). Data was collected using a self-administered online questionnaire. 225 medical students, 342 allied health students, 404 engineering students and 280 law students were invited to the study where only a total of 177 responded. The highest prevalence of self-medication with antibiotics was seen among medical students who obtained it over the counter. It was commoner among the 4th years who are higher in seniority and have a knowledge in pharmacology. Amoxicillin was the most commonly used antibiotic among all groups. The common illnesses for which self-medication was used were sore throat and fever. A notable finding was that a majority from non-medical students self-medicate with antibiotics for only 1 to 2 days whereas, medical students and allied health students self-medicate for a duration of 2-4 days. Although increased family income is linked to an increased tendency to self-medication, it was not significant in our study. In conclusion the results of our study indicate that self-medication is common among students and in spite of knowledge in clinical pharmacology, medical students self-medicate. This emphasizes the need to raise awareness on the knowledge of the proper use of antibiotics and the dangers of self-medication among undergraduates, as well as the need to monitor the sale of antibiotics without prescriptions by the pharmacies.

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