

ABSTRACT

Self medication is the use of drugs to treat self diagnosed disorders or symptoms or the intermittent or continued use of prescribe drugs fro chronic or recurrent disease or symptoms (WHO, 2002). Self medication is practiced widely for various reasons such as to promote health, to prevent symptoms or treat illness. It is estimated globally that more than 50% of drugs world wide are purchased without a prescription from pharmacies or street vendors in the informal sector (WHO, 2010).

The reason for self medication are attributed to over the counter sales of drugs, high costs of medication consultations, dissatisfied with medical practitioners, inadequate regulation of distribution of drugs, sale of prescribed drugs among other reasons. Self medication is a useful tool to treat minor ailments but improper self medication practice or medication abuse may lead to serious adverse drug reactions and possibly fatal consequences.

In Uganda there is no clear data showing the prevalence of self medication but there is suspicion that self medication is high. Reason for this assumption is that drugs can be bought from pharmacies and drug shops without prescriptions. Thus, this study aimed to assess the prevalence and factors leading to self medication in Luzira, Nakawa division Kampala.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was used involving 100 respondents from selected homes in Luzira, data collected was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. 70% of respondents reported practices self medication within the past three months of the study. The commonest conditions that were self medicated were headache 39.5%, Cold/Flu 17.1% and fever 14.5%. The commonly used drugs for self medication were paracetamol 39.5%, cold cup 15.9% and Coartem and Amoxicillin each 7.9%. The major reason for practicing self medication was mildness of the symptoms and the drugs were mostly brought from pharmacies and retail shops.

Drug regulatory and health authorities have to dedicate some resources used to raise awareness of the community of Luzira and the general public on the problems and consequences of self medication so that they can practice better self medication.

Moreover, it might be helpful if the concepts and principles of self medication could be reflected in the formal curricula of health care disciplines in Uganda.