

Introduction: Self-medication is the use of medicines to treat self-recognized illnesses or symptoms without professional advice or prescription. Most of these medications are considered risk free and useful for the treatment of common health problems, their excessive use can also lead to unfavorable reactions such as the risk of getting cancer, antibiotic resistance, adverse drug reactions and loss of resources.

Objectives: The Main objective: This study investigated on the “factors influencing self-medication among International Health Sciences students, Namuwongo”.

The specific objectives were: To identify the individual factors influencing self-medication among IHSU Students in Namuwongo, To assess the knowledge of IHSU students towards self-medication, To determine the health system factors influencing self-medication among IHSU students, Namuwongo, Makindye division Kampala district by 2014.

Methodology: The study was a cross sectional employing quantitative methods of data and was carried out among 196 students of International health sciences university. Convenience non probability sample was used by selecting students from 5 different courses and this was done during the month of September 2014. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.0

Results: The sample consisted of 196 students 112(57.1%) of the respondents were females compared to males 84(42.9%). The prevalence of self-medication was 91.3%. Whereby 76 (38.8%) out of 84(42.9%) of the male students practice self-medication while 103(52.6) out of 112 (57.1%) of the female students also practice self-medication.

The commonly used drugs showed that majority (167) out of 196 respondents reported that they use analgesics, 92 out of 196 included antibiotics and 70 out of 196 reported anti-malarial drugs; the least used are anti-helminthes. 69% of the respondents gave long waiting time at health facility being the reason for them to resort to self-medication followed by other reasons that accounted 18%, shortage of health workers 8%, distance to health facility 4% being the least.

Conclusion: There was no significant difference between socio-demographic characteristics among students regarding self-medication. Self-medication behavior varied significantly with knowledge factor on the experience of illness among students and health facility factor on duration of waiting time.

Recommendations: The laws should be enforced to help policy makers and regulatory authorities to streamline the process of drug regulations, updating the list of essential medicines, and safety issues of over the counter drugs.