

**ASSESSMENT OF AWARENESS, PRACTICES, AND PERCEPTION OF SELF-MEDICATION AMONG THE GENERAL POPULATION OF CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR (AURANGABAD), MAHARASHTRA**

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ABSTRACT **Introduction:** Self-medication, the practice of individuals using medicines without professional consultation, is widespread, particularly in countries with limited healthcare access. While it can provide temporary relief, it also poses risks such as incorrect diagnosis, adverse drug reactions, and antimicrobial resistance. **Aim And Objective:** to assess the prevalence, awareness, and perception of self-medication, identify influencing factors, and evaluate commonly used medication categories. **Methodology:** Cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey conducted at tertiary care hospital. Total responses collected for the survey were 307 through a 20-question form. **Results:** The prevalence of self-medication was 72.5%. Analgesics (58.3%), antipyretics (45.7%), and antibiotics (38.9%) were the most commonly self-administered drugs. The primary sources of medication information were past prescriptions (47.1%), family and friends (35.4%), and online resources (26.8%). While 64.2% of participants checked expiration dates before use, only 41.5% were aware of potential drug interactions. Antibiotic misuse was noted in 32.8% of respondents. Financial constraints (55.6%) and ease of access to medicines (49.3%) were the main drivers of self-medication. **Conclusion:** Despite some awareness, unsafe self-medication practices remain prevalent. Targeted public health initiatives, including educational campaigns, stricter regulations, and improved healthcare access, are essential to mitigate risks and promote safe medication practices.

KEYWORDS : self-medication, antimicrobial resistance, drug interactions

INTRODUCTION:

The World Health Organization, also known as WHO, defines self-medication as an individual's ability to manage their own health, prevent disease, encourage health, and cope with illness and disability, either on their own or in conjunction with a healthcare provider. Additionally, it can be utilized for symptoms or chronic illnesses^[1]. It also goes by the name OTC medicine^[2]. The practice of self-medication is common in many countries.

But in underdeveloped countries like India, where drugs are freely available and healthcare services are inadequate, self-medication is increasingly common. Families, friends, neighbours, chemists, previously prescribed medications, and newspaper advertisements are popular sources of self medication^[3,4]. As an example, chlorpheniramine maleate, dextromethorphan hydrobromide and diphenhydramine are used as self medication for colds and coughs; aspirin and paracetamol are used as painkillers; paracetamol, ibuprofen and aceclofenac are used as antipyretics; chlorhexidine and iodine are used as antiseptics; and ciprofloxacin, amoxicillin, and azithromycin are used as antibiotics. These medications are used for self-medication^[6,7].

Self-medication wastes resources, makes infections more resistant, and can lead to serious health issues like uncomfortable side effects and prolonged suffering^[8]. Globally, resistance to antimicrobial medications is currently a problem, especially in underdeveloped countries where antibiotics are freely available. As a result, it is essential to utilize these medications with a doctor's professional consultation. It could result in incorrect self diagnosis, a failure to detect interactions, warnings, and precautions, as well as a failure to identify and report adverse medication reactions. It might result in inappropriate or excessive dosages, prolonged drug use, and food-drug interactions. The challenge of self medication is growing for healthcare professionals due to antimicrobial resistance and related problems^[6,7,9].

AIM AND OBJECTIVE:

The study aimed to assess Awareness, Practices, and Perception of Self-Medication Among the General Population of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad) Maharashtra.

The objectives included assessing the prevalence of self-medication among the study population, evaluating their knowledge and

awareness regarding its risks and benefits, and analyzing the various factors influencing these practices. Additionally, the study sought to examine the sources of information relied upon for self-medication, identify the commonly used drug categories and the level of awareness regarding potential drug interactions, and assess public attitudes toward consulting healthcare professionals before using medications.

Methodology:

Cross-sectional, questionnaire-based survey was conducted at MGM Medical College, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar in February 2025 following the approval from MGMECRHS. The study was conducted as per ICH-GCP guidelines.

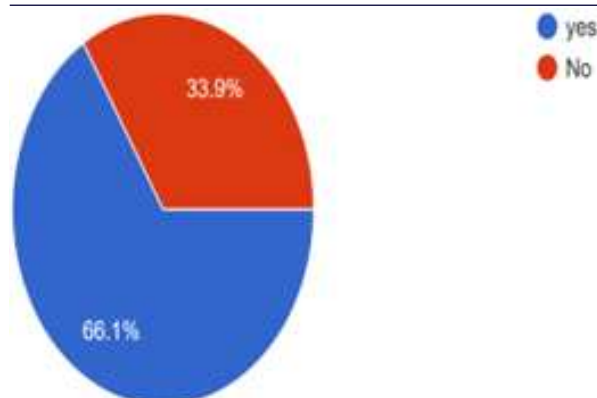
Participants selected for the survey were individuals aged 18 years and above from various socio-economic backgrounds living in Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad). Individuals taking prescription medicines were excluded.

Following data was recorded through a validated and structured questionnaire:

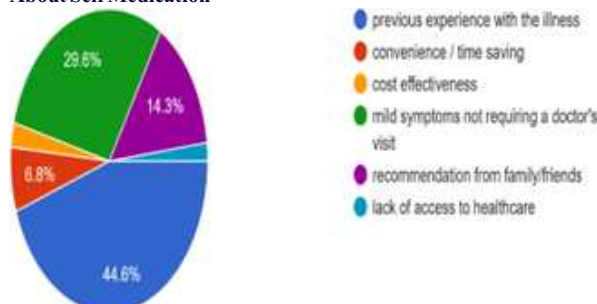
- Demographic information
- Awareness and practices of self-medication
- Knowledge and perception of self-medication
- Behaviour and attitude towards self-medication.
- For calculation of sample size for present study, Alpha = $\alpha=0.05$, Power = 0.90, medium effect size was considered = 0.50 with 50% population proportion. Using PS software sample size was found to be 273.
- Total responses collected were 307.

RESULT:

The collected data was analyzed and formulated into a result and presented. After analysis of questionnaire, among 307 participants we found that the prevalence of self-medication was 72.5%. Analgesics (58.3%), antipyretics (45.7%), and antibiotics (38.9%) were the most commonly self-administered drugs. The primary sources of medication information were past prescriptions (47.1%), family and friends (35.4%), and online resources (26.8%). While 64.2% of participants checked expiration dates before use, only 41.5% were aware of potential drug interactions. Antibiotic misuse was noted in 32.8% of respondents. Financial constraints (55.6%) and ease of access to medicines (49.3%) were the main drivers of self-medication.



Graphical Representation Of Participants Who Were Aware About Self Medication



Graphical Representation Of Reason For Self Medication



Graphical Representation Of Source Of Self Medication

DISCUSSION:

The findings of our study highlight the widespread prevalence of self-medication among the general population of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar (Aurangabad), Maharashtra. While many respondents were aware of potential risks, gaps in knowledge regarding drug interactions and antibiotic misuse were evident. Analgesics, antipyretics, and antibiotics were the most commonly self-administered drugs, with sources of information often being non-professional, such as past prescriptions, family, and online resources. A significant proportion of participants expressed a willingness to consult healthcare professionals if access were easier and more affordable. The study's findings are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that self-medication is more prevalent in populations with financial or logistical barriers to professional healthcare. Studies from other Indian states and similar socio-economic settings have reported comparable trends in self-medication practices, reinforcing the need for nationwide policy interventions.

CONCLUSION:

Despite some awareness, unsafe self-medication practices remain prevalent. Targeted public health initiatives, including educational campaigns, stricter regulations, and improved healthcare access, are essential to mitigate risks and promote safe medication practices.

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