



Health Complications Associated with Self-Medication



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Abstract

Self-medication is the selection of such type of medicines, which use by a person for the treatment of self-recognized or self-diagnosed conditions or symptoms. These self-suggested medicines some time create such type health problems, which caused loss of life. In this review study, the researcher included and analyzed the more linked or associated research studies. Based on the findings of the previous studies it is concluded by the researcher that self-medication caused life threatening health problems.

Keywords: Self-medication, Health Problems

Background of the Study

Self-medicating is dangerous. It can cause serious problems, so it is important to set up an appointment with a doctor when any symptoms of an illness or mental health condition occur. A huge number of the people may lose their health due to unawareness about the proper used of medicines similarly some of the people; based on their own expertise use the medicines for gaining relief from the health problems. Temporary these self-suggested medicines give relief to a person while after some time the problems arise again. What kind of complications caused by self-medications the researcher decided to conduct a research study under the title "Health Complications caused by self-medications".

Objectives of the Study

Following were the main objectives of the study

a) To assess the perception of various researchers (available in the form of literature) regarding self-medication and its complication.

Review of related literature

What is Medicine?

According to Medicine Dictionary (2013) medicine may be defined as "Medicine is the science and practice of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease. Medicine encompasses a variety of health care practices evolved to maintain and restore health by the prevention and treatment of illness". Khan defines medicine as "it is the branch of science which deals with:

- i. Practice of diagnosing the sign & symptoms of ill, diseases and other health problems and
- ii. Prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injuries etc.

Medication

When we get abnormality in any of the functions of the body systems, thus we need to recover the functional capacity of the effected systems by using different kind of medicine. The practice of using medicine for the recovery of the body abnormalities is called medication. The word medication refers to the use of chemical as well as natural substances to tackle the health problems such as illness, diseases etc (Medication Administration Curriculum Section, 2011). It is further explained by the author that medicine is the use of all type of chemical as well as natural substances to prevent or to treat the illness or diseases.

Self-medication

Self-medication is become increasingly an important area within healthcare. It moves patients towards greater independence in making decisions about management of minor illnesses, thereby promoting empowerment [1]. According to wsmi.org [2] "Self-medication is a human behavior in which an individual uses a substance or any exogenous influence to self-administer treatment for physical or psychological ailments. The most widely self-medicated substances are over-the-counter drugs used to treat common health issues at home, as well as

dietary supplements". The term self-medication used for taking drugs without any advice or prescription by the medical experts [3]. Ruiz [4] define Self-medication as " the selection and use of medicines by individuals (or a member of the individuals' family) to treat self-recognized or self-diagnosed conditions or symptoms" Many of the people often diagnose their problems by comparing their problems/diseases with someone else being diagnosed for the same signs and symptoms. Sometime the self-suggested medicine can give positive results but in majority cases, it creates so many health problems.

Why people do the practice of self-medication

Self-medication may cause many health problems. Beside the negative effects of self-medication, many of the people use the self-suggested medicine. According to Jan (ND) the main factors caused self-medication are; Costly medication and medical bills, lack of education and over confidence, freely available drugs at corners shops, selling drugs without prescription and lack of strict governments checks. Unavailability of medical facilities, poverty, and unawareness about health principles all are the factors responsible for the adaptation of self-medication practice (Jan (ND). the author further stated that freely available drugs at corners shops, selling drugs without prescription and lack of strict governments checks also the factors responsible for self-medication among the people.

What happen with our health with self-medication?

In many cases the self-medication leads a person toward lifelong health problems Such as Antibiotics resistance, insomnia, depression, abdominal discomfort, immune system weakness, kidney failure, and liver cirrhosis etc [5]. Hussain [6] stated that self-medications might cause headache, fever flu, allergy, cough, body ache, acidity and minor infections. The author further stated that use of routine or general is medicine like sleeping pills and toothache medications may cause variety of health problems for its user. Potential risks associated with of self-suggested medicine include incorrect self-diagnosis, delays in seeking medical advice when needed, infrequent but severe adverse reactions, dangerous drug interactions, incorrect manner of administration, incorrect dosage, incorrect choice of therapy, masking of a severe disease and risk of dependence and abuse [4]. According to Web Sources [7] the main problems caused by self-medication include:

- a) Inaccurate diagnosis
- b) Using inappropriate medications that cause side effects
- c) Masking the symptoms of a serious condition
- d) Delaying medical advice
- e) Inaccurate dosage that leads to accidental overdose
- f) Mixing medications that are not safe to mix, which may result in legal costs or health concerns
- g) Risk of abuse
- h) Risk of developing an addiction or several addiction

Hughes et al. [1] reported that many health risks such as misdiagnosis, use of excessive drug dosage, prolonged duration of use, drug interactions and poly pharmacy may cause of self-medications. Long-term use of self-suggested medicine may lead a person towards lifetime health problems. Potential risks of self-medication practices include: incorrect self-diagnosis, delays in seeking medical advice when needed, infrequent but severe adverse reactions, dangerous drug interactions, incorrect manner of administration, incorrect dosage, incorrect choice of therapy, masking of a severe disease and risk of dependence and abuse [8].

How much people are the victim by self-medication

According to Syed N [9] in the developing countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal, the rate of self-medication is high. More than 50% people are taking drugs without a doctor's advice.

Findings of the Study

After analyzing the findings of the previous studies the following findings are drawn

- i. Self-medication may cause incorrect self-diagnosis, delays in seeking medical advice, insomnia, depression, abdominal discomfort, immune system weakness, kidney failure, and liver cirrhosis etc [10].
- ii. Costly medication and medical bills, lack of education and over confidence, freely available drugs at corners shops, selling drugs without prescription and lack of strict governments checks all the factors caused self-medication.

Conclusion of the study

On the basis of analysis, the research arrived at conclusion that self-medication create many health complications such as improper self-diagnosis, delays in seeking medical advice, insomnia, depression, abdominal uneasiness, weakness of immune system, kidney failure, liver cirrhosis, etc.

Recommendation of the study

Based on findings and conclusion the research recommended that:

- a) Awareness may be created among the masses about the complications caused by self-medication by conducting different awareness program by such seminars etc.
- b) For the purpose to sought out the problem of self-medication, all agencies of government must take strict actions against those who involved in the practice of self-medication.
- c) To control the practice of self-medication, all medical centers must seal out those medicines that advised by the medical experts.

d) Drugs inspectors must keep proper check and balance on the sale of medicines.

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