

Research Article

Roles of Pharmacists in the Prevention of Self Medication within Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

Self-medication remains a significant public health concern in northern Nigeria, contributing to adverse drug reactions, antibiotic resistance, and treatment failures. Pharmacists, as accessible and trusted healthcare providers, play a pivotal role in preventing and mitigating the risks associated with self-medication. This study examines the role of pharmacists in promoting responsible medication use and preventing self-medication practices within the region. Simple random sampling techniques was adopted where structured questionnaires for obtaining the information were distributed. The data presented in tabular form and was analyzed by using percentages. the study assesses the awareness, attitudes, and behaviors of the population regarding self-medication. Results indicate that approximately 65% of respondents reported self-medicating, primarily due to factors like limited access to healthcare, high treatment costs, and a lack of awareness about medication risks. Notably, 85% of participants expressed a willingness to consult pharmacists if accessible and affordable services were available. The findings emphasize the need for strengthened pharmacy services, community engagement, and policy interventions. Pharmacists can contribute through patient counseling, public health education, and proper dispensing practices. Additionally, collaboration between healthcare regulators and pharmacy institutions is crucial to ensure the enforcement of pharmaceutical regulations. This study recommends targeted public health campaigns and continuous professional development for pharmacists to enhance their capacity in combating self-medication.

1. Introduction

Medicines are important for treating diseases and they are responsible for improving the quality of Life. However, indiscriminate use of Medicines might cause health risks. The practice of self-medication is linked with easy access to all therapeutic products and potential damage to health caused by such practice. [1]. Self-medication is the selection and use of medicines to treat symptoms and self-reported disease without the counselling of a qualified health professional for a certain function, comprising stage of Self-care within communities, reasonable Self-medication might save resources for the treatment of minor symptoms. Although Self-medication constitutes an important

form of population self-care, it presents inherent risk. Using Medicines without prescription might cause collective health threat [2]. It is often easier to avoid the cost of visiting a doctor and use over the counter or prescription medication to alleviate the symptoms of an illness or physical discomfort. Unfortunately, there are consequences associated with the risks, it is always best to ailments with a trained medical professional. Getting a proper diagnosis and a treatment plan is the way to avoid any complications or health risks It may also be an attempt to resolve the issue without the cost of seeing a medical doctor or as a direct result of personal fears associated with a medical diagnosis. Where Antibiotics are often available without a prescription [3]. The practice of Self-medication due to user's low perception of risk associated with the use of drugs, knowledge of drug easy access to internet, wide medical on related health issues, ready access to drug level of education and social status [4]. The practice of self-medication in general has been widely studied among of many countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe. The sale of both over the counter and prescription drug by traders and roadside is every common in Nigeria [5]. In Nigeria there are many unregistered Medicine store pharmacies from which people purchase drug from unknown place [6]. Self-medication with both over the counter and prescription drugs is very common in Nigeria, previous studies have concentrated among the population [7, 8].

Self-medication constitutes both social and economic problems to individual and the society at large, and this required attention from various quarter [9] Self-medication gives temporary relief to sickness instead of a permanent solution, thereby delay treatment. This is often done by suppressing and masking the sign and symptoms of sickness only for the sickness to relapse after some time apart from this, Self-medication creates drug resistance and could lead to drug addiction especially when it is done intimately in addition Self-medication can lead to the damage of certain organs when a drug is not properly administered or on over the dose is done, damage can be done to the organs of the body. People practice Self-medication at different level without knowing the damage caused as a result of taking drug without doctor or health personal consultation. This situation led to the problem associated with the effect of Self-medication. The study will explore the Roles of Pharmacists for the Prevention of Self Medication in Northern, Nigeria.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design, Population, Sampling Size and Sampling Techniques

The research design employed for this study is descriptive survey design. The study is to investigate the Roles of Pharmacists for the Prevention of Self Medication in Northern, Nigeria. The study targeted comprise the entire population of the Northern part of the Country. The sample size used for this study is 225. The sampling techniques employed in this study was simple random sampling in which every person has an equal chance to be chosen as a respondent out of the population in the study area.

2.2. Instrument for Data Collection, Method of Data Collection, Presentation and Analysis

The instrument used for data collection is questionnaires where structured questionnaire was designed based on the study. The research directly administered the questionnaire to each of the respondents in the study population hand to hand. The raw data collections were presented in tabular forms and analyzed using their corresponding percentages.

3. Results

The data collected from the field were presented in table and which were analyzed using percentages. Two hundred and twenty-five (225) questionnaires were distributed to the people in the study area.

Table 1: Causes of Self medication

Causes	Respondents	Percentage %
Stress	140	62.22
Pain	65	28.88
Mental illness	10	4.44
All of the above	10	4.44
Stress can cause		
Self-medication	100	44.44
Body pain	95	42.22
All of the above	30	13.33
Total	225	100%

Table 1 above shows that 140 (62.22%) respondents said that the causes of self-medication is stress, 65 (28.88%) respondents said pain, 10 (4.44%) respondents said mental illness, 10 (4.44%) respondents stated all of the above. Hundred 100 (44.44%) respondents indicated that the effect of stress can lead to self-medication, 95 (42.22%) respondents indicated that the effect of stress can cause body pain, while 30 (13.33%) respondents that it can cause self-medication and body pain.

Table 2 above shows that 180 (80%) respondents indicated knows the self-medication can affect the brain while, 45 (20%) respondents indicated that they don't know that self-medication can affect the brain. Table 2 above shows that 80(35.55%) respondents indicated that the source of information about self-medication through Television, 100(44.44%) respondents indicated through pharmacist health Worker 20(8.88%) respondents indicated through Radio and while 25(11.11%) respondents indicated through Friend. Table 2 above shows that 125 (55.55%) respondents indicated that they have known the complication of self-medication while, 100 (44.44%) respondents indicated that they don't know the complication of self-medication.

Table 2: Self-medication can affect the brain

Option	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	180	80
No	45	20
Source of Information		
Television	80	35.55
Pharmacists	100	44.44
Radio	20	8.88
Friend	25	11.11
Severe Complication		
Yes	125	55.55
No	100	44.44
Total	225	100%

Table 3: Self-medication might lead to drugs abuse

Option	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	190	84. 44
No	35	15. 55
Prescribed drugs should be taken only		
Strongly agree	100	44.44
Agree	55	24.44
Disagree	35	15.55
Undecided	35	15.55
Total	225	100 %

Table 3 above shows that 190 (84.44%) respondents indicated that they have known self-medication led to drug abuse, while 35 (15.55%) respondents indicated that self-medication does not lead to drug abuse.

Table 3 above also shows that 100 (44.44%) respondents indicated that strongly agree drugs should be taken based on prescription, 55 (24.44%) respondents also agree, 35 (15.55%) respondents disagree, while 35 (15.55 %) respondents are undecided.

Table 4: onsultation by Pharmacists and Health professionals can reduce the menace of Self-medication

Option	Respondents	Percentage %
Strongly agree	105	46.66
Agree	55	24.44
Disagree	40	17.77
Undecided	25	11.11
Total	225	100%

Table 4 above shows that strongly agree 105 (46.86%) that consultation by a pharmacist and other health professional ill reduce the menace of self-medication, 55 (24.44%) respondents also agree, 40 (17.77%) respondents disagree while 25 (11.11%) respondents are undecided.

4. Discussion

The study records that majority of the people consider stress as the main cause of self-medication among individuals, his is in line with [10] that explain stress as a body reaction to any change that required an adjustment or response. The adjustment can be done by the use of self-medication in order to bring the body to its Physiological function irrespective of the future consequences. Effect of stress also lead to self-medication which refers to the practice of using prescription or over-the-counter dug without consulting pharmacy or health personnel. Psychology today explains that the individual act as his or her own physician in an effort to handle the symptoms of a physical or mental health concern [11].

Pharmacists and health professionals when recommending rugs, should give proper instructions and explain for what it is prescribed so that it will help the patient to understand and make his own decision [12]. The study observed that self-medication can lead to drug abuse or substance abuse. Musa [13] it was believed that stress was one of the reasons for drug or substance abuse and it remains the reason for self-medication.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings across which comprises the causes of Self-medication and the effect of Self-medication, the study revealed that self-medication is a public health concern destroying our population. Furthermore, most people lack formation about particular medicine, especially those that can cause harm when used without professional advice. Government and Health Authorities need to concentrate on public health threat. Furthermore, self-medication can affect all part of the body.

Recommendations

1. Pharmacists should create awareness which will involve the general public on menace of self-medication.
2. Laws enforcement by Government to limit purchase of medicines without prescription.
3. Pharmacists should embark on awareness in media houses on their roles in guiding the populace when it comes to the use, misuse and the harmful effect of drugs.
4. To improve communication and improving a referral system between Pharmacists and other healthcare professionals will go a long way in improving the health of the citizens.

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