

Prevalence of self-medicating practices of allopathic medicine among mothers of children under 12 years of age attending a Teaching Hospital, Sri Lanka and associated factors

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Objectives:

The aim of the study was to identify the prevalence of self-medication of oral allopathic medication among mothers of children less than 12 years in an urban area of Colombo and factors associated.

Methods:

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried among 350 mothers who have children under 12 years of age who attend to Out Patient Department of Colombo South Teaching Hospital during March to April 2014. Data was collected by an interviewer administered questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS 15.0.

Results:

Majority (85.1%) was between 25-44 years and mean age of mother was 33.1 ± 6.707 SD. Most of them (86.9%) are Sinhalese, 73.7% were only educated up to O/L s. 64% were housewives. There were more female children (54%) and nearly half were between 1-4 years of age. Majority (N= 331, 95%) self-medicated their children. 37.7 % (n=132) self-medicated their children other than Paracetamol. Salbutamol, Amoxicillin, Chlorpheniramine were among them. There was a statistically significant association between mother's higher education level (P=0.011), un-occupancy (P=0.005), father's higher education level (P =0.007), father's higher occupational category (P= 0.02), older child (P=0.004) and high parity (P=0.033) with self-medication. Significant proportion of mothers had obtained antibiotics from a pharmacy without prescription.

Conclusions:

Considerable proportion of mothers self-medicates their children in urban population. Risk of misusing over the counter medication and obtain them without prescriptions were high. There is significant health concerns regarding self-medication of children less than 12 years and both parents and authorities should pay more attention.

Key words- self-medication, children, misuse