Abstract

Objectives: The aims of this study are to determine the prevalence, attitudes and behaviours of medication storage and self-medication amongst female students at Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted and cluster random sampling technique was used for respondent selection. A pre-piloted questionnaire was administered to female respondents so as to collect the data. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 12 and analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis procedures. Results: Of the 481 participants (mean age; SD was 22.1; 3.3), 93.1% (n=448) students stated that they stored medicine in their rooms, while 70.7% (n=340) stated that they stopped taking a prescribed medicine without consulting a doctor. The prevalence of self-medication was 80.9% (n=389). The most common reasons for self-medication were related to their knowledge of their ailment and its treatment (58.0%), 14.4% thought it saved time and 8.5% mentioned that medication given by provider was not effective. The most common symptoms were otorhinolaryngology problems (22.5%), followed by respiratory disease (19.6%), Gastro Intestinal Tract (GIT) disease (18.1%) and headache/fever (16.8%). Commonly used medicines were analgesics & antipyretics (30.2%), ear, nose & throat drugs (10.8%), vitamins & minerals (10.8%), GIT drugs (8.5%), anti-infections (7.3%) and herbal medicines (3.5%). Prevalence of medicine storage and self-medication practice is high among educated female students in USM. Conclusions: There is a need to educate the students to ensure safe practice by increasing their awareness. Strict policies need to be implemented on the unrestricted availability of medicines so as to prevent the wastage of medicines.

Keywords

Self Medication. Health Knowledge,
Attitudes, Practice. Malaysia.