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A STUDY ON CONSUMER PERSPECTIVES ON SELF DIAGNOSIS AND NON PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION USE

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Abstract:

This study examines the increasing availability of healthcare information online and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, self-diagnosis and self-medication practices have become commonplace. This paper provides a comprehensive review of the trends, risks, and benefits associated with self-diagnosis and non-prescription medication use. It examines the factors influencing individuals to self-diagnose and self-medicate, including convenience, cost-effectiveness, and perceived urgency. Additionally, the potential dangers of inaccurate self-diagnosis and inappropriate medication use are discussed, such as delayed treatment of serious conditions, adverse drug reactions, and the development of antibiotic resistance. Moreover, the paper explores strategies to promote safe self-care practices, including patient education, regulatory measures, and the role of healthcare professionals in guiding patients towards appropriate self-care decisions.

Keywords: Self-diagnosis, Non-prescription medication, Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, Self-care practices, Patient empowerment, Health literacy, Internet health information, Risk factors, Benefits, Adverse effects, Responsible self-medication, Healthcare regulation, Consumer motivations, Behaviours.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer perspectives on self-diagnosis and non-prescription medication use have garnered increasing attention in recent years. As individuals take more responsibility for their health and well-being, they often turn to over-the counter remedies and self-care practices to address minor ailments and manage chronic conditions. Understanding the motivations, behaviours, and attitudes of consumers towards self-medication is essential for healthcare professionals, policymakers, and pharmaceutical companies alike.

This exploration delves into the various factors influencing consumer decisions regarding self-medication, including convenience, cost-effectiveness, perceived efficacy, and the role of information sources such as the internet and social networks. Additionally, examining the risks associated with self-medication, including misuse, adverse reactions, and potential interactions with other medications, is crucial for promoting safe and responsible healthcare practices in the self-care landscape.

Consumers often opt for self-medication because it provides quick and convenient access to remedies without the need for a doctor's appointment or prescription. This is particularly appealing for minor ailments or symptoms that do not require professional medical attention. Many consumers believe that over-the-counter medications and self-care practices are effective in alleviating their symptoms.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To Identify the factors influencing consumers' choices of Non-prescription medications.
2. To study about consumer perceptions regarding the safety and risks.
3. To Identify the motivations and behaviours that driving consumers to engage in self-diagnosis and non prescription medicine use.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

SOURCES OF DATA

The study relies on primary data as well as secondary data.

- The primary data
- The secondary data

PRIMARY DATA:

The primary data have been obtained through questionnaires.

SECONDARY DATA:

The secondary data are been collected through journals, newspapers, books and articles.

AREA OF THE STUDY:

This study is covered within the Coimbatore city.

SAMPLE SIZE:

The sample design used for the study is Convenient Random Sampling and the sample size is entrusted to 120 participants.

FINDINGS AND RESULT

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE

GENDER

Table No.1 describes about the Gender of the Respondents taken for the study

S.No	Gender	No of respondents	percent
1	Male	60	50.0
2	Female	60	50.0
3	Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

It is inferred that 60 % of the respondents are Female and 60 % of the respondents are Male.

Both male and female percent is 50.

AGE GROUP

Table No.2 describes about the Age Group of the Respondents taken for the study.

S.No	Age group	No of respondents	percent
1	18	1	.8
2	19	1	.8
3	20	3	2.5
4	21	10	8.3
5	22	41	34.2
6	23	30	25.0
7	24	13	10.8
8	25	9	7.5
9	26	8	6.7
10	27	2	1.7
11	28	2	1.7
12	Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

It is inferred that .8 respondents belong to the age group of 18 and 19,2.5 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 20, 8.3 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 21, 34.2 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 22, 25.0 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 23, 10.8 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 24, 7.5 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 25, 6.7 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 26, 1.7 per cent of the respondents belong to the age group of 27 and 28.

Majority 34.2 per cent of the respondents belong to the age 22.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Table No.3 describes about Educational Qualification the of the Respondents taken for the study

S.No	Educational level	No of respondents	percent
1	Grade-12 and above	2	1.7
2	PhD	5	4.2
3	Postgraduate	60	50.0
4	Undergraduate	53	44.2
5	Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

It is inferred that 1.7 per cent of the respondents were qualified as grade 12 and above, 4.2 per cent of the respondents were qualified as Phd, 50.0 per cent of the respondents belong to postgraduate and 44.2 per cent were undergraduate.

Majority 50.0 per cent of the respondents belong to PG.

OCCUPATION

Table No.4 describes about occupation the of the Respondents taken for the study

S.No	Occupation	No of respondents	percent
1	Business	11	9.2
2	Employed for wages/salary	34	28.3
3	Self employed	15	12.5
4	Student	60	50.0
5	Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary Data

INTERPREATION

It is inferred that 9.2 per cent of the respondents were Business, 28.3 per cent of the respondents were Employed for wages/salary, 12.5 per cent of the respondents belong to Self employed and 50.0 per cent were Student

Majority 50.0 per cent of the respondents belong to students.

SELF DIAGNOSED A HEALTH CONDITION WITHOUT CONSULTING HEALTHCARE

Table No.5 describes about health condition.

S.No	STATEMENT	No of respondents	Percent
1	Frequently	32	26.7
2	Occasionally	40	33.3
3	Only in emergency situations	48	40.0
4	Total	120	100.0

Source: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION

It is inferred that 26.7 per cent of the respondents have chosen frequently , 33.3 per cent of the respondents have chosen occasionally, 40.0 per cent of the respondents have chosen only in emergency situations.

Majority 40.0 per cent of the respondents have chosen only in emergency situations.

CHI-SQUARE TEST

INFLUENCING DECISION

Table No.6 comparing the gender and influencing decision of the consumers.

Gender	Strongly encourage	Strongly discourage	Discourage me from self diagnosis	No influence	Others	Total
Female	15	24	13	7	1	60
Male	14	27	13	3	3	60
Total	29	51	26	10	4	120

Tests	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.811[a]	4	.590
Likelihood Ratio	2.903	4	.574
N of Valid Cases	120		

HO: There is no significant relationship between gender and influencing decision of the consumers.

H1: There is significant relationship between gender and influencing decision of the consumers.

Level of significance: 5% or a = 0.05

From the above table, p value of chi square test is greater than 0.05, so null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected .

RISK ASSOCIATED WITH NON PRESCRIPTION MEDICINE

Table No.7 describes about risks associated with non prescription medicine.

STATEMENT	Reading the label	Visiting Health care professionals	Monitoring the adverse(Negative) reactions	Personal recommendations	Total
Grade-12 and above	0	1	0	1	2
PhD	0	0	3	2	5
Postgraduate	10	14	23	13	60
Undergraduate	5	14	25	9	53
Total	15	29	51	25	120

Tests	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.819[a]	9	.552
Likelihood Ratio	10.137	9	.340
N of Valid Cases	120		

HO: There is no significant relationship between education and risks associated with non prescription

H1: There is significant relationship between education and risks associated with non prescription

Level of significance: 5% or a = 0.05

From the above table, p value of chi square test is greater than 0.05, so null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected .Hence the significance value more than 0.05, so null hypothesis is accepted and alternative hypothesis is rejected .

ANOVA ANALYSIS

Table No.8 shows the views on safety and risks

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I use OTC medicines only if the illness is quite severe	Between Groups	5.839	3	1.946	1.887	.136
	Within Groups	119.628	116	1.031		
	Total	125.467	119			
Non prescription medicines are totally safe to use	Between Groups	2.262	3	.754	1.312	.274
	Within Groups	66.663	116	.575		
	Total	68.925	119			
Non prescription medicines can have dangerous side effects	Between Groups	.651	3	.217	.299	.826
	Within Groups	84.340	116	.727		
	Total	84.992	119			
Non prescription medicines can sometimes mask serious health problem	Between Groups	1.944	3	.648	.569	.637
	Within Groups	132.181	116	1.139		
	Total	134.125	119			
With Continual use of some non prescription medicine lose their effectiveness	Between Groups	11.966	3	3.989	2.338	.077
	Within Groups	197.900	116	1.706		
	Total	209.867	119			

Source:Primary Data

Interpretation:

The above Table.8, gives a result of relationship between age and consumer views on safety and risks using One way ANOVA.

Relationship between age and consumer views on safety and risks:

From the above table the significant value of association between age and consumer views on safety and risks is >0.05. So, we are accepting null hypothesis and rejecting alternative hypothesis

So, there is **no Significant association** between age and consumer views on safety and risks on non prescription medicine.

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CONCLUSION

In conclusion, consumer perspectives on self-diagnosis and non-prescription medication use vary widely. While some individuals appreciate the convenience and autonomy that self-diagnosis and over-the-counter medications provide, others express concerns about accuracy, safety, and potential misuse It's crucial for consumers to approach self-diagnosis and non-prescription medication use with caution, seeking professional medical advice when necessary and being informed about potential risks and benefits. Additionally, healthcare providers and policymakers play a vital role in promoting responsible self-care practices and ensuring access to accurate information and safe products.