KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICES REGARDING SELF-MEDICATION OF ANTIBIOTICS AND ITS EFFECTS AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN BIYAGAMA EDUCATIONAL DIVISION

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Misuse of antibiotics is becoming a serious issue in Sri Lanka which leads to a global public health problem. Antibiotics can cause severe reactions which require significant amount of cost of care. Literature indicates high rate of inappropriate usage of antibiotics. This study aimed to assess knowledge and practices regarding self-medication of antibiotic among school teachers in Biyagama educational division. A cross-sectional study was conducted in type 1AB schools in Biyagama educational division where 150 teachers (34 male and 116 female) got involved. Data was collected using interviewer-administered questionnaire to assess knowledge and practices concerning self-medication of antibiotics and after effects. Prevalence of self-medication with antibiotics was 53.3% (n=80). It was identified that the most commonly used oral antibiotic was Amoxicillin (n=123, 82%). Further, majority of participants (n=102, 68%) were unaware of proper antibiotic usage. Participants obtaining antibiotics directly from the pharmacy without a prescription were most commonly for cold (n=112, 74.7%), fever (n=75, 50%) and cough (n=89, 59.3%). Previous experience using antibiotics without prescription had been (n=58, 38.7%), whereas participants show an act of reusing antibiotics without instructions when similar symptoms appear (n=52, 34.7%) and stopping antibiotics when feeling better from symptoms (n= 37, 25.3%). Healthcare professionals' assistance is required in reducing self-medication of antibiotics. In conclusion, actions or intervention programs are mandatory to promote the appropriate usage of drugs.

Keywords: Antibiotics, Self-Medication