

Knowledge and practice regarding parental self-medication among parents of paediatric patients at Teaching Hospital Jaffna

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Background: There seems to be a common belief amongst parents that some childhood illnesses are minor and that they do not require a doctor's consultation. Inappropriate parental self-medication may lead to an increase in hospital admissions and morbidity. This study aimed to determine the knowledge and practice regarding parental self-medication and the influence of selected sociodemographic factors among parents of paediatric patients admitted to Teaching Hospital Jaffna.

Method: This was a hospital-based descriptive cross-sectional study carried out among 173 parents of patients admitted to paediatric wards of Teaching Hospital Jaffna. Systematic sampling was used to select the participants. Data were collected by using an interviewer-administered questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS 23 with the significance level set at 0.05. Chi-square test, Fisher's exact test and Mann-Whitney U-test were used to determine the relationship between parental self-medication and other variables.

Results: In total, 173 parents participated with a response rate of 94%. Mean age of the sample was 32 (± 5.5) years; most were mothers (92.8%) and housewives (73%). Among the respondents, 87.7% had self-medicated their children. Previous experience with drugs (99.3%) and mild illness (96.5%) were the most common reasons for self-medication. The most common condition for self-medication was fever (99.3%). A significant association was observed between knowledge on parental self-medication and highest educational qualification ($p < 0.001$) and occupation ($p < 0.001$). With respect to practice, older children were more likely to be self-medicated than younger children ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: The study revealed that parental self-medication is widespread. This indicates the importance of providing health education to prevent harmful parental self-medication practices.

Keywords: Parental Self-Medication, Knowledge, Practice.