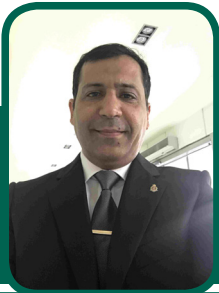


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What drives intentional overdose with nonprescription drugs? A cross-sectional study

Background: Use of over-dosage of Non- Prescription Drugs (NPD) among university students is a serious public health issue. However, there are no extensive studies that measured the prevalence of taking more than the recommended dose of NPD and/or identified the risk associated with this behavior among university students.

Objectives: This study was undertaken to assess the prevalence and associated risks of self-over-dosage with NPDs in university students in United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Methods: A cross-sectional survey-based study was conducted from January to April 2014, among 2875 students in three randomly selected universities. A structured and validated questionnaire was used to collect the responses of the students. SPSS version 20 was used to analyze the data.

Results: Out of 2875 students, only 2,355 surveys were fully answered, returned back and included in the present study. Of 2,355, more than half (1,348; 57.2%) the participants reported using ONPD in the past 90 days before conducting the study and were asked to complete the survey. Only 290 (22%) of a total 1348 participants reported taking more than the recommended dose of Oral NPD in the previous three months before conducting the study. Analgesic/antipyretic (223, 16.5%) and anti-allergic (67, 4.9%) drugs

were more than other classes of the ONPD, reported to be taken in a dose more than the recommended dosage. The most common justifications for taking more than the recommended dose of ONPD among respondents were severe symptoms (6%), the belief that the recommended dose would not be sufficient to relieve the symptom (5%), the belief that a stronger dose would relieve the symptoms faster (11%), and previous experience (4%). Our results identified three risk factors for taking more than the recommended dose of NPD. High frequently drug-users of daily use (OR = 3.494, 95% CI: 1.677-7.279) ($p < 0.001$), and students from non-medical colleges had higher odds of taking more than the recommended dosage as compared to students from medical colleges (OR = 1.486, 95% CI: 1.060-2.085, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, participants with a polypharmacy behavior had higher odds of taking over-dosage of ONPD than single NPD users (OR = 1.918, 95% CI: 1.440-2.555) ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion: There are a sizable proportion of university students that use over-dosage of NPD, but it is more serious issue when it comes to non-medical student. There is a need for educational programs designed to increase awareness among all university students and to motivate them not to use over dosage of NPD. Further studies are also required to investigate additional explanatory variables that could influence the practice of over dosage with NPD.

Biography

Al Kubaisi is a post-graduate researcher in his final year of PhD program in Public Health from Gloucestershire University, UK. He awarded his master degree, Excellent with First Honours, in Public Health (MPH) from Hamadan bin Mohamed Smart University, Dubai during the academic year 2010- 2012. He attended his under graduate school at the University of Baghdad where he received his Bachelor degree in Science of Pharmacy in 1996. He spent ten years working as a pharmacist in UAE. His research's interest is in self-medication practice and in the use of non-prescription drugs by university's students. For example, investigating students' behavior towards reading the drug information leaflets. Recently, he developed and evaluated an Educational Intervention designed for modifying university students' practice, knowledge, awareness and attitude in favor of responsible self-medication

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