



ANTIBIOTIC SELF MEDICATION (ASM) AMONG SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KEGALLE EDUCATIONAL DIVISION

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Self medication with antibiotics is a major health problem and has not much been assessed in Sri Lanka. The objectives of study were to describe patterns of self-medication with antibiotics and its associating factors and to assess the knowledge on antibiotics among school teachers.

This study was conducted as a descriptive cross sectional study among 384 teachers in 8 selected schools in Kegalle education division using a validated self administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS, version 16 and results are presented as frequencies and percentages. Correlations were assessed using Chi-square test at a significance level of $P < 0.05$.

Of the 384 questionnaires distributed 374 (97%) were completed and returned. 74.8% ($n=279$) of the study sample was females. Mean age of the sample was 43 ± 9 years ($\pm SD$). The knowledge on antibiotics, was poor in 56% ($n=209$). Only 24.9% knew that antibiotics were useful only in bacterial infections. 67.7% of the study sample self-medicated with antibiotics. 27.3% has self-medicated at least once over the past 12 months. Being above the age of 40 years and living near the city significantly associated with ASM. Of those who have self-medicated with antibiotics 169 (75.1%) have used amoxicillin, 25 (11.1%) have used ampicillin, 6 (2.7%) used erythromycin and 4 (1.8%) used co-amoxiclav. Illnesses they self medicated with antibiotics were common cold 141 (62.7%), sore throat 101 (44.9%), cough 55 (24.4%), physical injuries 55 (24.4%), fever 27 (12%) and dental problems 26 (11.6%). The main source of information and the place they acquired antibiotics was community pharmacies 150 (66.7%). Most had stopped the antibiotic course when the symptoms disappeared 164 (72.9%). 173 (76.9%) who self medicated knew that it is not safe. ASM is high among the sample tested. Knowledge on antibiotics was poor. They had inappropriate and harmful practices. Age above 40 years and living near the city associated with antibiotic self-medication. ASM is a problem and the general public should be educated regarding the hazards of ASM.