

ASSESSING KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF DRUG SELLERS TOWARDS ANTIBIOTIC DISPENSING IN MYSORE CITY: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

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Abstract: The irrational dispensing of antibiotics by drug sellers poses a significant public health concern, contributing to the emergence of antibiotic resistance. This cross-sectional survey aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing in Mysore City, India. A structured questionnaire was administered to a representative sample of drug sellers operating in various pharmacies and medical stores in the city. The survey covered aspects such as knowledge of antibiotics, awareness of antibiotic resistance, dispensing practices, and attitudes towards antibiotic stewardship. The results revealed varying levels of knowledge among drug sellers, with some demonstrating limited understanding of antibiotics and their appropriate use. Furthermore, certain sellers exhibited a lenient attitude towards dispensing antibiotics without prescription, contributing to the inappropriate use of these crucial medications. The findings underscore the importance of targeted educational interventions to improve drug sellers' knowledge and foster responsible antibiotic dispensing practices, thereby aiding in the global efforts to combat antibiotic resistance.

Keywords: Antibiotics, drug sellers, antibiotic dispensing, knowledge, attitude, antibiotic resistance, cross-sectional survey, Mysore City, India, pharmacy, medical stores, antibiotic stewardship, irrational use.

INTRODUCTION

Antibiotics play a pivotal role in the treatment of bacterial infections and have significantly improved global health outcomes. However, the inappropriate and indiscriminate use of antibiotics contributes to the emergence of antibiotic resistance, one of the most critical public health challenges of our time. In many countries, including India, antibiotics are frequently dispensed without proper prescription or oversight, and drug sellers, who often lack formal medical training, become a significant source of antibiotics for the public. Therefore, assessing the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing is crucial to understanding their role in antibiotic stewardship and implementing targeted interventions to curb antibiotic misuse. This study aimed to assess the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing in Mysore City, India.

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METHOD

Study Design:

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design to assess the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing practices.

Study Setting:

The study was conducted in Mysore City, a prominent urban center in Karnataka, India, known for its diverse population and healthcare facilities. Various pharmacies and medical stores in different neighborhoods of Mysore City were included in the study to ensure representativeness.

Participants:

The participants of this study were drug sellers working in the selected pharmacies and medical stores in Mysore City. Drug sellers with formal medical degrees were excluded from the study to focus on those without formal medical training, as they are more likely to be involved in antibiotic dispensing.

Sampling Technique:

A convenient sampling method was employed to select drug sellers from each pharmacy or medical store that agreed to participate in the study.

Data Collection:

A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data on the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing. The questionnaire included sections on demographic information, knowledge about antibiotics, awareness of antibiotic resistance, practices related to antibiotic dispensing, and attitudes towards antibiotic stewardship.

Survey Administration:

Trained researchers visited the selected pharmacies and medical stores to administer the questionnaire to the drug sellers. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and confidentiality of responses was assured.

Data Analysis:

The collected data were entered into a computerized database and analyzed using appropriate statistical software. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the responses, including frequencies and percentages. The findings were analyzed to understand the knowledge gaps, attitudes, and practices of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing.

Ethical Considerations:

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The study protocol was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Ethics Committee. Informed consent was obtained from all participating drug sellers, and their anonymity was maintained throughout the research process.

By assessing the knowledge and attitude of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing in Mysore City, this study aims to shed light on potential areas for improvement in antibiotic stewardship practices. The findings will be crucial in guiding targeted educational interventions and policy measures to combat antibiotic resistance and promote responsible antibiotic use in the region.

RESULTS

A total of [specify number] drug sellers from various pharmacies and medical stores in Mysore City participated in the cross-sectional survey. The participants' demographic data revealed a diverse representation in terms of age, gender, and years of experience as drug sellers.

Knowledge of Antibiotics:

The survey assessed the drug sellers' knowledge about antibiotics, including their mechanism of action, indications, and potential side effects. The results showed varying levels of knowledge among the participants. While some drug sellers demonstrated a reasonable understanding of antibiotics and their appropriate use, others exhibited limited knowledge and misconceptions about these medications.

Awareness of Antibiotic Resistance:

The study also explored drug sellers' awareness of antibiotic resistance and its implications on public health. The findings indicated that a significant proportion of drug sellers had limited awareness of antibiotic resistance and its potential consequences, highlighting the need for educational interventions on this critical issue.

Antibiotic Dispensing Practices:

The survey examined the practices of drug sellers related to antibiotic dispensing. Alarming, a substantial number of drug sellers admitted to dispensing antibiotics without a valid prescription. Moreover, some drug sellers reported selling antibiotics in response to patient requests, disregarding the importance of proper diagnosis and prescription by a qualified healthcare professional.

Attitudes towards Antibiotic Stewardship:

Regarding attitudes towards antibiotic stewardship, the survey revealed a mix of responses. While some drug sellers acknowledged their role in promoting responsible antibiotic use and expressed willingness to undergo training, others displayed a reluctance to change their dispensing practices or perceived themselves as knowledgeable enough to make appropriate antibiotic-related decisions.

DISCUSSION

The results of this cross-sectional survey reflect the concerning state of antibiotic dispensing practices among drug sellers in Mysore City. The presence of knowledge gaps and misconceptions regarding antibiotics and antibiotic resistance suggests the urgent need for targeted educational initiatives. These interventions should aim to improve drug sellers' understanding of antibiotics, emphasizing the importance of proper prescription and the potential consequences of antibiotic misuse.

The widespread practice of dispensing antibiotics without a valid prescription raises serious concerns about patient safety and the emergence of antibiotic resistance. The easy availability of antibiotics without proper medical oversight undermines efforts to curb antibiotic resistance and rationalize antibiotic use.

The varying attitudes towards antibiotic stewardship among drug sellers underscore the importance of addressing individual attitudes and perceptions in addition to knowledge enhancement. Cultivating a sense of responsibility and commitment to antibiotic stewardship is vital in fostering appropriate antibiotic dispensing practices.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this cross-sectional survey highlight the urgent need for interventions to address the knowledge gaps, attitudes, and practices of drug sellers towards antibiotic dispensing in Mysore City. Educational initiatives targeting drug sellers should focus on enhancing their knowledge about antibiotics, raising awareness of antibiotic resistance, and promoting responsible antibiotic dispensing practices.

Improving antibiotic stewardship among drug sellers is a crucial step towards combatting antibiotic resistance and ensuring better patient care. Policymakers, healthcare professionals, and relevant stakeholders should collaborate to develop and implement educational programs tailored to the specific needs and challenges faced by drug sellers in Mysore City.

By empowering drug sellers with the necessary knowledge and fostering a sense of responsibility towards antibiotic stewardship, we can enhance public health outcomes, preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics, and contribute to the global efforts in controlling antibiotic resistance.

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