



**SELF-MEDICATION PRACTICES FOR DENTAL PAIN IN THE GENERAL
POPULATION OF PAKISTAN**

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ABSTRACT

Self-medication is the term used to define the usage and administration of drugs and medication according to one's own diagnosis and not by the prescription of a medical professional. It is commonly practiced since a long period of time, particularly due to the reason of it being cheaper and more convenient for the subject. A major reason the practice of self-medication is increasing is due the increased accessibility and availability of drugs and medications at pharmacies and medical stores. Antibiotic medications are one of the most renowned and commonly used drugs and have also been found to be to most consumed drug in self-medication. This research was conducted to study the practice of self-medication in dental pain amongst the general population of Pakistan and determine the level of knowledge of the people. 58 (77.3%) of the participants had suffered from a toothache during their lifetime while the remaining 17 (22.7%) did not. Out of those 58 people, 29 (50%) would always seek medical attention while 18 (31%) would not. Our study showed a high prevalence of self-medication in Pakistan. The most common medication taken was paracetamol which is a good analgesic. Health care facilities should be made easily accessible and available to all and that too at affordable rates in order to reduce the practice of self-medication.

KEYWORDS: Dentistry, Self-Medication, Prescription drugs, Oral health, Toothache, Pain.

INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is the term used to define the usage and administration of drugs and medication according to one's own diagnosis and not by the prescription of a medical professional.^[1] It is commonly practiced since a long period of time, particularly due to the reason of it being cheaper and more convenient for the subject. There are, however, many issues and drawbacks of self-medication, which includes misdiagnosing the problem, creating drug resistance by wrongly using the medication, and most importantly the wasting of such resources.^[2,3]

A major reason the practice of self-medication is increasing is due the increased accessibility and availability of drugs and medications at pharmacies and medical stores.^[4] Antibiotic medications are one of the most renowned and commonly used drugs and have also been found to be to most consumed drug in self-medication.^[5] This is probably due the fact that the

general population is unaware of the mechanism of action and especially of the concept of drug resistance of antibiotics.

Many studies have been conducted on the topic of self-medication as it is an important issue which needs to be handled appropriately. Educating the general population and increasing awareness regarding the side effects and disadvantages of self-medication is an important step in controlling this issue. This study was conducted in Pakistan to determine the level of the practice of self-medication and the types of drugs consumed in cases of dental pains and toothaches.

OBJECTIVES

This research was conducted to study the practice of self-medication in dental pain amongst the general population of Pakistan and determine the level of knowledge of the people.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study design – This was a descriptive cross-sectional study.

Study duration and sample size - The study was carried out over a period of one month, from mid-December 2020 to mid-January 2021, and data was collected from 75 participants.

Study population and setting

The study was community-based, and data was collected from the general population of Pakistan.

Inclusion criteria

People of both genders, aged 12 and above were included in the study.

Exclusion criteria

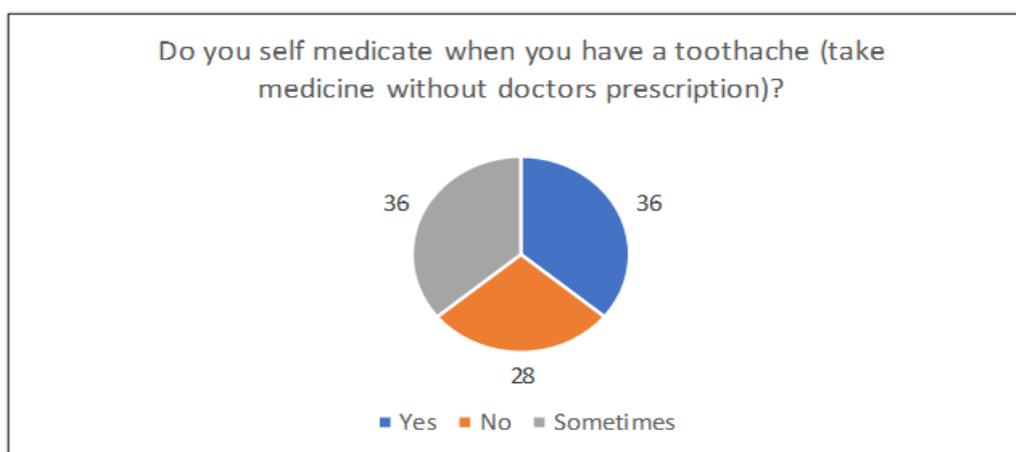
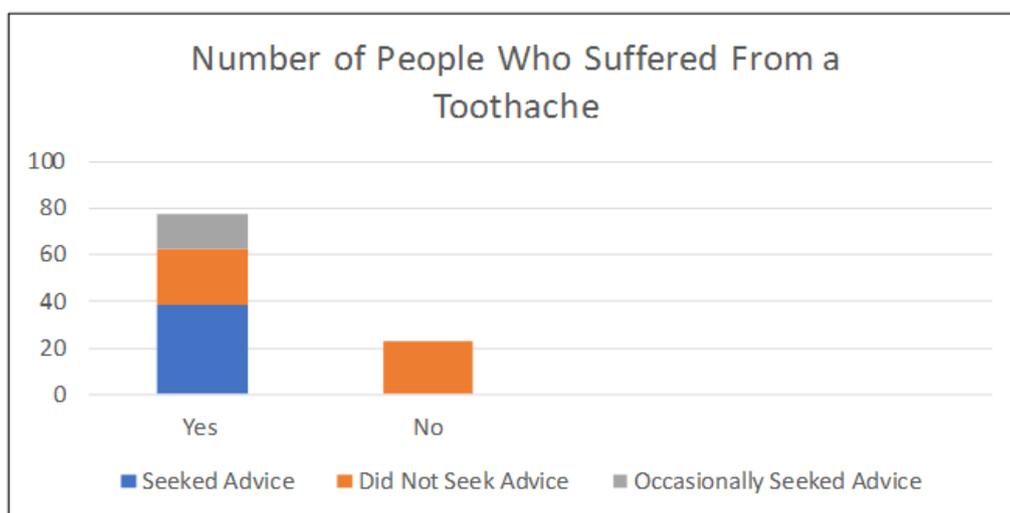
People below the age of 12 and those who were not willing to be a part of the study were excluded. Dentists and other dental professionals were also excluded.

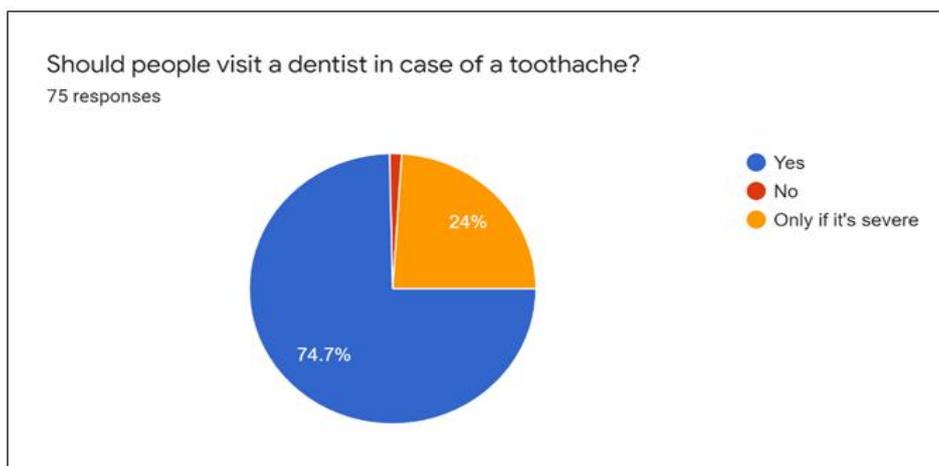
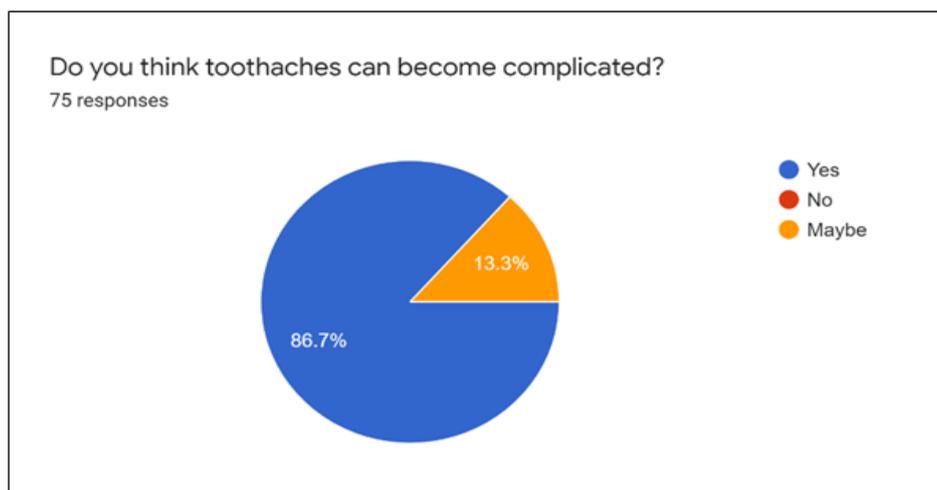
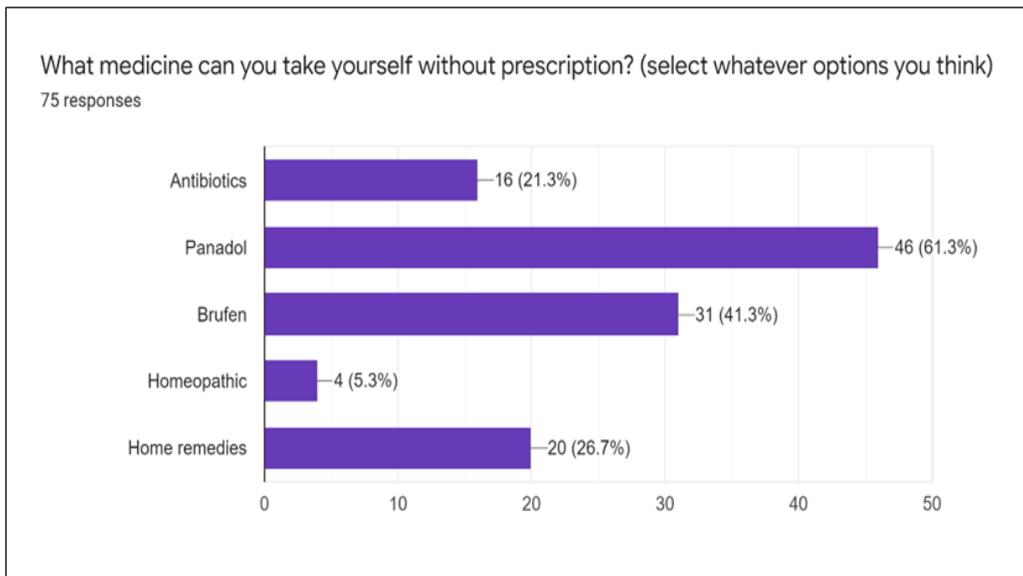
Sampling technique and data collection

Consecutive sampling technique was used and data was collected from 75 participants over the period of 1 month. Consent was taken from each enrolled subject. All data was collected on a structured questionnaire and statistical calculations were then performed using SPSS version 25 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, SPSS Inc. USA).

RESULTS

Out of 75 participants enrolled in our study, 20 (26.7%) were male and 55 (73.3%) were female. The age ranged from 14-60 years, with a mean of 27.613 years (SD 7.077). Most of the participants 55 (73.3%) were graduates. 58 (77.3%) of the participants had suffered from a toothache during their lifetime while the remaining 17 (22.7%) did not. Out of those 58 people, 29 (50%) would always seek medical attention while 18 (31%) would not. The rest of them, that is 11 (19%), would occasionally seek medical advice depending on the pain.





DISCUSSION

Our study showed a high prevalence of self-medication in Pakistan. The most common medication taken was paracetamol which is a good analgesic. Home remedies are also commonly used by people and are at least a good

option due to less chances of side effects and complications.

In a similar study conducted in Nigeria^[6] the prevalence of self-medication was also high at 41.5%, and like our results they had also found that analgesics were the most

consumed drug. Analgesics were also found to be the most commonly taken drug in another study of Nigeria.^[7] Various other researches also showed a high level of self-medication such as the study by Baig *et al.*^[8] and Komalraj *et al.*^[9] which the prevalence percentages of 57.3% and 100% respectively.

Our study, however, was concise and has many limitations. It was a simple prevalence study designed to determine the percentage of people self-medicating. Different associating factors need to be studied as well in order to broaden our knowledge and therefore make appropriate changes to decrease the level of self-medication.

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of self-medication in cases of dental pain was found to be high in our study, with analgesic agents being the most common medication consumed. Health care facilities should be made easily accessible and available to all and that too at affordable rates in order to reduce the practice of self-medication.

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None to declare

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