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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE GREAT THING IN THE WORLD IS NOT SO MUCH WHERE WE STAND, BUT IN WHAT DIRECTION WE ARE MOVING

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Regarding Self Medication among 4<sup>th</sup> Year MBBS Students, of Nmc, Multan, Pakistan

#### ARTICLE INFO

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** A number of evaluations (at small and large scale) regarding self-medication have been carried out but very few of them reflect the opinions of the medical students.

**Objectives of the Study:** To find out the knowledge, attitude and practices regarding self-medication among students of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS NMC, Pakistan

**Study Design:** Cross-sectional observational study.

**Setting:** The study was carried out among 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS students of NMC, Multan and data was completed and analyzed in the department of community medicine NMC, Multan, Pakistan.

**Duration:** Study was conducted from 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 to 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2014.

**Study Population:** Students of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS NMC, Multan.

**Inclusion Criteria:** Students of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS.

**Exclusion Criteria:** Students of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and final year MBBS are excluded from the study.

**Sample Size:** Sample size was 210.

##### Results:

- Age of 4<sup>th</sup> year students \_\_\_ 3.33%(16-18 year), 30.95%(19-21), 60.48%(22-24), 4.76%(25-27) & 0.48%(28-30)
- Gender distribution of 4<sup>th</sup> year students \_\_\_ 28.57% male students and 71.43% female students.
- Self-medication among 4<sup>th</sup> year students \_\_\_ 45% male and 36% female students self-medicate while 55% male and 64% female students do not self-medicate.
- Educational status of Parents of 4<sup>th</sup> year students \_\_\_ 30.14% are master, 35.17% are graduate, 7.66% are intermediate, 15.55% are matric and 11.48% are under matric.
- Frequency of self-medication \_\_\_ 12.34% students always, 66.67% off & on while 20.99% very rarely self-medicate.
- Reasons for self-medication \_\_\_ 92.59% students self-medicate for convenience while 7.41% for cost savings.
- Common complaints for self-medication \_\_\_ 40.15% complaints are of Headache, 36.50% are of fever while 23.35% are of common cold.
- 2
- Commonly used drugs for self-medication \_\_\_ 44.67% panadol, 19.38% dispirin, 12.92% ibuprofen, 12.08% metronidazole and 10.95% augmentin are used.
- Adverse reaction by self-medication \_\_\_ 93.83% students did not observe adverse reactions while 6.17% observed adverse reactions.
- Conclusion: From the study we concluded that self-medication is commonly practiced in 4<sup>th</sup> year students of the institute. There is a dire need to create awareness and educate the students about the dangers of self medication.

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## INTRODUCTION

Self-medication refers to the selection and administration of medicine without the consultation of a doctor or a specialist and without the definitive diagnosis of the disease.

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It manifests as a major challenge in all classes of people whether literate or illiterate, wealthy or famished, rural or urban. While self-medication has the comfort and convenience of liberating time money and energy, it is not proposed on account of hazards posed by multiple adverse effects that can result from improper self-diagnosis, wrong doses, incorrect timing & inappropriate choices of medicines, development of resistance and progression of disease due to lack of appropriate

diagnosis and treatment. Students of medical field have been discerned to be particularly inclined towards it, utilizing their medical knowledge as a plus point and a confidence booster.

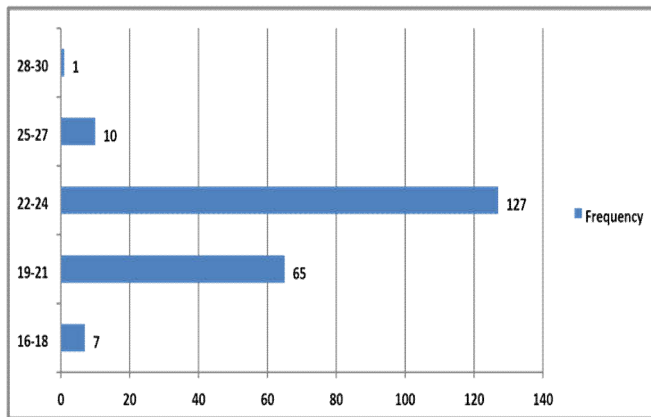
**Objectives**

- To study knowledge, attitude and practices of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS students regarding self-medication.
- To determine the frequency of self medication among students.
- To ascertain the rationalization for self-medication.
- To discover the prevailing complaints for self-medication among self-medicating students.
- To find out the drugs commonly used for self-medication among self-medicating students.
- To determine the percentage of adverse effects that were encountered as a result.

**RESULTS**

**Table 1. Age distribution of the students**

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
16-18	7	3.33
19-21	65	30.95
22-24	127	60.48
25-27	10	4.76
28-30	1	0.48



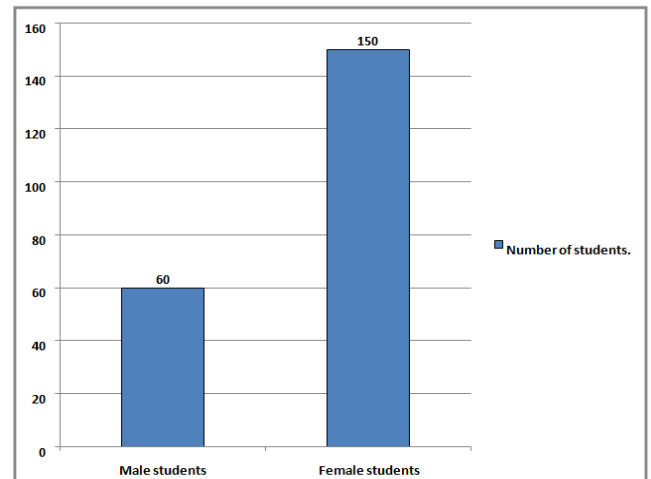
**Figure 1. Frequency distribution of students according to age groups**

**Total students:** 210 Frequency distribution of age: Frequency distribution of students according to their age group.

Figure 1 Out of total, 3.33% (16-18 year), 30.95% (19-21), 60.48% (22-24), 4.76% (25-27) & 0.48% (28-30) Gender Distribution Of 4th Year MBBS Students.

**Table 2. Gender Distribution of 4th Year MBBS Students**

Gender	Number of students	Percentage
Male students	60	28.57
Female students	150	71.43

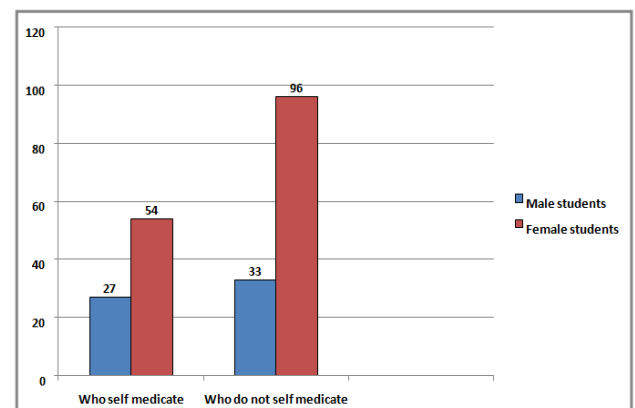


**Figure 2. Gender Distribution of 4<sup>th</sup> Year MBBS Students**

Out of total, 28.57% are male students and 71.43% are female students.

**Table 3. Frequency distribution of Self-medication among male and female students of 4th Year MBBS**

	Male students		Female students	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Who self medicate	27	45	54	36
Who do not self medicate	33	55	96	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>		<b>150</b>	



**Figure 3. Frequency distribution of self-medicating and non-self-medicating male and female students**

Out of total male students, 45% self-medicate and 55% do not self-medicate while among total female students, 36% self-medicate and 64% do not self-medicate.

**Table 4. Frequency distribution of self-medication among self-medicating students**

	Total self-medicating students: 81		
	Always	Off and On	Very Rarely
Number of students	10	54	17
Percentage	12.34	66.67	20.99

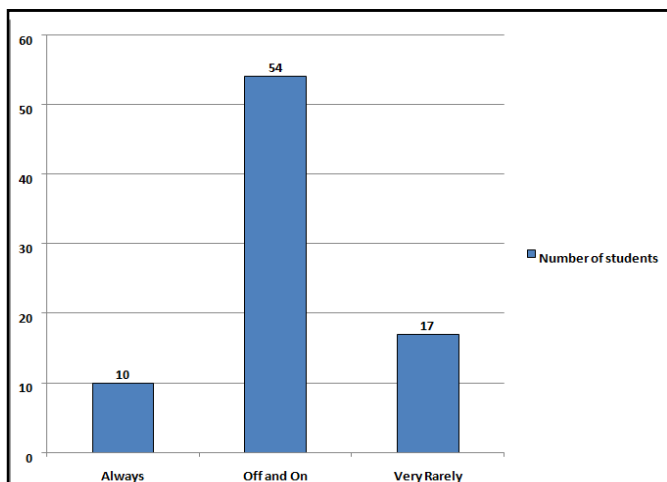


Figure 4. Frequency distribution of self-medication among the students

Out of total self-medicating students, 12.34% students always, 66.67% off & on while 20.99% very rarely self-medicate

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Reasons for Self-Medication Among Students Of 4th Year MBBS

Total self-medicating students: 81		
	Cost Saving	Convenience
Number of students	6	75
Percentage	7.41	92.59

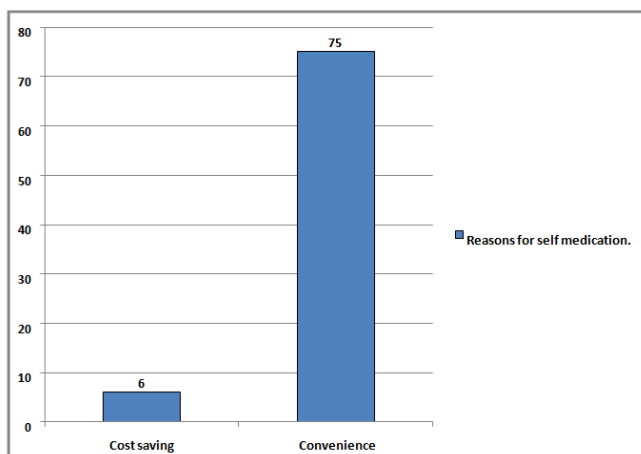


Figure 5. Distribution of reasons for self-Medication among the students

Out of total self-medicating students, 92.59% students self-medicate for convenience while 7.41% for cost savings.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution of common complaints for self-medication

COMMON COMPLAINTS	PERCENTAGE
COMMON COLD	23.35
FEVER	36.50
HEADACHE	40.15

Out total complaints, 40.15% complaints are of Headache, 36.50% are of fever while 23.35% are of common cold

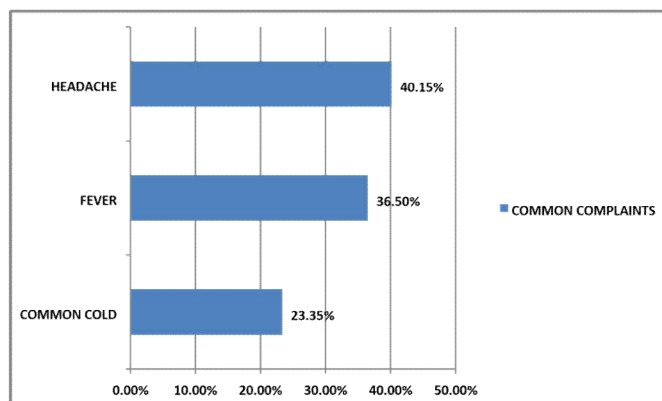


Figure 6. Common complaints for self-medication

Table 7. Frequency Distribution of Commonly Used Drugs for Self Medication

DRUGS	PERCENTAGE
Dispirin	19.38
Augmentin	10.95
Panadol	44.66
Metronidazole	12.08
Ibuprofen	12.92

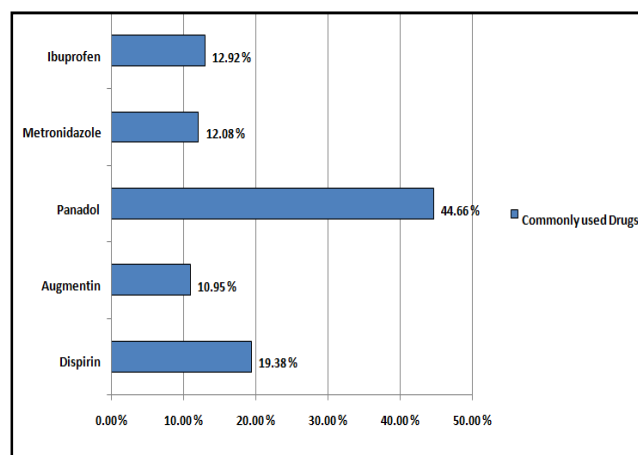


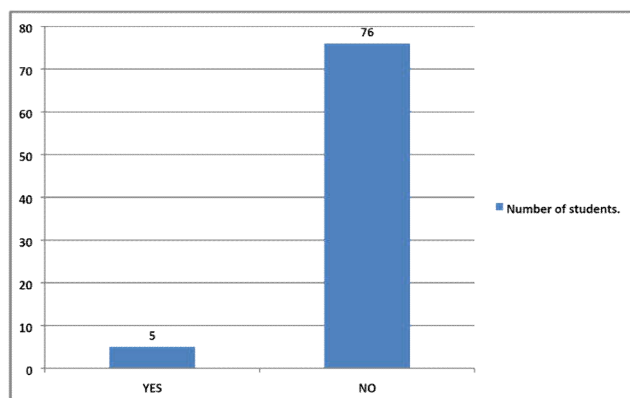
Figure 7. Distribution of Commonly Used Drugs for Self Medication

Out of total commonly used drugs, 44.67% Panadol, 19.38% Dispirin, 12.92% Ibuprofen, 12.08% Metronidazole and 10.95% Augmentin are used.

Table 8. Frequency distribution of self-medicating students on the basis of encountering or not encountering the adverse reaction by self-medication

Total self-medicating students: 81		
	Adverse reaction encountered	Adverse reaction not encountered
Number of students	5	76
Percentage	6.17	93.83

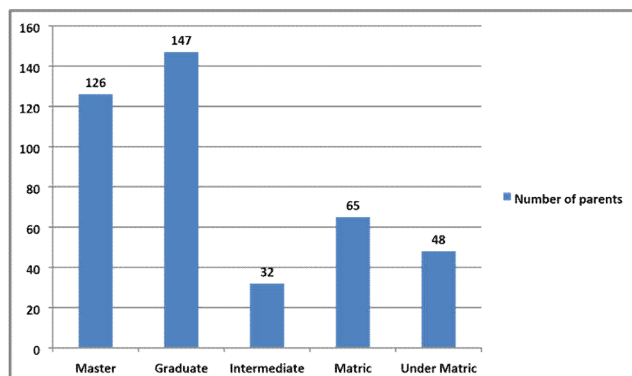
Out of total self-medicating students, 93.83% students did not observe adverse reactions while 6.17% observed adverse reactions.



**Figure 8. Frequency distribution of self-medicating students on the basis of encountering or not encountering the adverse reaction by self-medication**

**Table 9. Frequency distribution of educational status of the parens of students of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS**

Educational status	Number of Parents	Percentage
Master	126	30.14
Graduate	147	35.17
Intermediate	32	7.66
Matric	65	15.55
Under Matric	48	11.48
Total	= 418	



Note: Each father and each mother is treated as a single parent

Out of total parents, 30.14% are master, 35.17% are graduate, 7.66% are intermediate, 15.55% are matric and 11.48% are under matric

## DISCUSSION

Our research was conducted to see the habit of self-medication among students of 4<sup>th</sup> year MBBS NMC, Multan. The present study indicates that self-medication is routinely practiced (38.57%) among 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students of NMC. In our study it was found that practice of self-medication was more prevalent among males (45%) than females. (36%) Total 210 students were included in KAP study, out of which 71.43% were females and 28.57% were males. 60.48% of all of these students were of age 22-24 years, 30.95% were of age 19-21 years, 4.76% were of age 25-27 years, 3.33% were of age 16-18 years while 0.48% were of 28-30 years. Most common complaints for which medical students undergo self-medication include headache (40%), fever (37%) and common cold (23%). Our research illustrated that 12.3% of students always go for self-medication when they become ill while 67% use it off and on and 21% rarely use it. The most prevalent reason for the selection of self-medication was convenience (93%). The

second reason was cost savings (7%). The most commonly used drugs were panadol (45%), dispirin (19.3%), ibuprofen (13%), metronidazole (12%) and augmentin (11%). 94% of all the students who self-medicate were not encountered any adverse reaction while 6% of these had adverse reactions.

## LIMITATIONS

- The study was hinged on self-supported data about self-medication in preceding 1 year, thus prone to recall bias.
- Moreover, although the students were encouraged to complete the questionnaire independently, mutual influence between the students could not be entirely ruled out.
- The conclusions drawn by the study would have been more generalized if it involved students of other classes or other medical colleges.

## Conclusion

Our study is consistent with the fact that prevalence of self-medication is precariously high in medical students of fourth year MBBS although being in medical field they are expected to be acquainted with the matter at hand. Thus our study manifests that self-medication is frequently practiced in students of the institute with analgesics being most commonly used and headache and fever being predominating morbidities for seeking self-medication. In these circumstances, faculty of the institute should create awareness and educate their students regarding draw backs of self-medication. Our study also appreciates the need of multicentric studies involving wider sections of medical professionals to estimate the magnitude of self-medication practice in medical fraternity. We recommend a holistic approach to prevent this problem from escalating further. This is a real issue and not to be taken lightly.

## Recommendation

- Students should possess thorough knowledge and apprehension regarding the hazards of self-medication. This is necessary if we aim to put an end to the practice of self-medication.
- In case of an ailment, students should be encouraged to make an appointment with the doctor and not suggest medication based on their own interpretation.
- Parents should also be addressed concerning the threats of self-medication.
- To extend the awareness regarding hazards of self-medication to general public, health practitioners ought to utilize the platform of electronic and print media.
- Medicine should not be given to the public without the prescription of a registered medical practitioner
- Easy access to the health care facilities should be ensured bearing in mind the principles of equity, efficiency, affordability, acceptability and timing.

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