

Abstract

Self-medication encompasses the use of the medicines by the users for self perceived health problems or the continuing use of medications formally prescribed earlier. The scope of the definition includes treatment of family members especially to minors and elderly. Self-medication with antibiotics is a global problem, the prevalence rates are high all over the world, up to 68% in European countries while much higher in the developing countries with rates going as high as 92% in the adolescents of Kuwait. A study done at Kenyatta National Hospital showed that 53.5% of the respondents had practiced self-medication with antibiotics. Self-medication with antibiotics masks the signs and symptoms of underlying disease and hence complicates the problem, creating drug resistance and delaying diagnosis. The study explored the existence of SMA in the sub county and the antibiotics used. The study compares the prevalence of self-medication with antibiotics among patients in Gatundu Sub County with the results of other studies done elsewhere. The main objective of the study was to establish the extent of self-medication with antibiotics among patients seeking treatment at Gatundu Sub-County Hospital. The study was cross sectional. The sample size was 382 patients identified through stratified sampling, simple random and systematic random sampling technique drawn from the outpatient department. Data was collected from the outpatient department using an interview guide. Data was analyzed using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences). Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used to analyze categorical data. Statistical significance level was set at 0.05. The data is presented in pie charts, tables and bar graphs. The prevalence of self-medication with antibiotics was 48% prevalence which was lower than other studies done in Northern Nigeria (50.3%), Sierra Leone (68.9%), Ghana (70%), Uganda (65.1%) Sudan (76%), India (62.67%), and in Kenya at Kenyatta National Hospital, 53.5%. Those aged between 18-24 years had a proportion of 45.8% and those who had college/university education (45%). Males (35%) had a higher proportion than females (30.9%). Self-medication with antibiotics was significantly associated with age ($p=0.0005$) and lack of medical insurance cover ($p=0.0198$). Only 20% of the respondents had a medical insurance cover. Sixty percent of the respondents gave the reason for self-medication as cost cutting measure. The source of antibiotic was from community pharmacy (81%). Amoxicillin (36%) was the most used drug in self-medication with antibiotics. In conclusion self-medication with antibiotics exists. Common source of antibiotics used in self-medication with antibiotics was community pharmacy. Respondents knew antibiotics dosage from pharmacy attendants. The study therefore recommends

that health education interventions on self-medication with antibiotics practices should target people of all ages, sex, education and community at large. There is need to recruit more members to have a medical insurance cover. Community pharmacies should not dispense antibiotics without prescriptions to patients. Interventions to decrease self-medication with antibiotics should emphasize on reducing access in obtaining antibiotics without prescription.