

Investigating Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Antibiotic Use among Consumers in Kandy District, Sri Lanka: A Call for Targeted Educational Interventions

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Antimicrobial resistance represents a significant global health challenge, primarily due to the inappropriate use of antibiotics. Understanding public knowledge and attitudes is crucial for managing this misuse. This study aimed to examine antibiotic use, knowledge, and attitudes among consumers at community pharmacies in the Kandy district, Sri Lanka. A self-administered, cross-sectional survey was conducted with 400 participants at three state pharmacies within the district. Data collection utilized a validated questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic characteristics, self-reported antibiotic use, knowledge of antibiotic use, and attitudes toward antibiotic use. Descriptive statistics summarized the data, while Chi-square and Fisher Exact tests explored the influence of demographic characteristics on knowledge and attitudes about antibiotic usage. The results revealed an equal distribution in the timing of last antibiotic use. Notably, 8% of participants admitted to self-medicating with antibiotics. A moderate level of knowledge was observed in 52.3% of respondents, and 78.0% correctly identified that antibiotics are intended for bacterial infections. However, a significant majority (82.8%) reported the misconception that antibiotics are effective against viral infections, and 32.8% believed that taking antibiotics for cold symptoms would expedite recovery. Despite these misconceptions, 90.0% of participants were aware of the potential for antibiotic resistance stemming from excessive use. While the study highlighted considerable knowledge about antibiotics among the public, it also uncovered a disconnect between their knowledge and attitudes. Consequently, the study underscores the need for educational interventions to promote the judicious use of antibiotics among consumers in Kandy's community pharmacies.

Keywords: Antibiotics, Public Knowledge, Attitudes, Antibiotics Usage, Sri Lanka