

# A Study to Assess the Usage of Over-the-Counter Drugs Among Student Nurses in Selected College at Kannur District

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## Abstract:

### ➤ *Background:*

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are widely used for self-management of minor illnesses. However, inappropriate usage may lead to adverse effects and drug misuse, especially among healthcare students.

### ➤ *Aim:*

To assess the usage of over-the-counter drugs among student nurses.

### ➤ *Methodology:*

A quantitative descriptive research design was adopted. A total of 200 nursing students were selected using convenient sampling. Data were collected using socio-demographic variables and a semi-structured questionnaire.

### ➤ *Results:*

The study revealed that 95% of students had used OTC drugs, with analgesics being the most commonly used. The majority showed moderate usage patterns. A significant association was found between OTC drug usage and semester of study.

### ➤ *Conclusion:*

OTC drug usage is highly prevalent among student nurses. Awareness programs are necessary to promote safe and rational drug use.

**Keywords:** OTC Drugs, Self-Medication, Student Nurses, Drug Usage, Minor Illness.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs are medications that can be purchased without a prescription and are commonly used for minor illnesses such as fever, headache, and cold. Due to easy accessibility and affordability, self-medication has become increasingly common.

The rational use of medicines ensures therapeutic effectiveness, minimizes adverse effects, and promotes patient safety. However, improper medication practices can lead to significant health risks, including drug misuse, adverse drug reactions, and increased healthcare costs

As future healthcare providers, nursing students have a crucial role in promoting rational drug use and educating patients about safe medication practices. Therefore,

understanding the patterns of OTC drug usage among nursing students is essential to identify knowledge gaps and promote safe, informed, and responsible medication use.

reported frequent practice of self-medication. The most commonly used drugs were analgesics, antipyretics, and antacids.

**II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The global burden of medication-related harm highlights the urgent need to assess patterns of OTC drug usage, knowledge levels, and associated risks among the population. cross-sectional observational study conducted by Anita A. Barde and Siddhi reorted that an overwhelming 98 % reported self-medication, with cough syrups (87 %), antibiotics (77 %), and analgesics (71 %) being most common, while misuse habits included 43 % taking OTC drugs once and 50 % twice daily, and adverse effects such as dry mouth (73 %), hypersensitivity (69 %) and diarrhea (64 %) were reported, driven by easy availability, lower cost, time savings, and avoidance of consultation fees.

Johnson D et al. results revealed that the prevalence of self-medication was 78.6% among the students. The study concluded that self-medication practice was highly prevalent among health professional students, emphasizing the need for awareness regarding rational drug use and potential risks of inappropriate medication

Kerala-based studies also support these findings. Dency and Joseph et al. conducted a descriptive study in that findings revealed that 72% of the students had adequate knowledge regarding OTC medications, while nearly 65%

**III. METHODOLOGY**

- Research Approach: Quantitative approach
- Research Design: Descriptive research design
- Setting: Canossa College of Nursing, Kannur
- Population: Student nurses
- Sample Size: 200
- Sampling Technique: Convenient sampling
- Data Collection Tools: Socio-demographic variables, Semi-structured questionnaire
- Data Analysis:
  - ✓ Descriptive statistics: Frequency, percentage
  - ✓ Inferential statistics: Chi-square test
  - ✓ Ethical Consideration: Ethical approval was obtained institutional ethics committee. Informed consent was taken from participants.

**IV. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

➤ *Socio-Demographic Variables*

Most students were aged between 18–22 years. Majority were female and belonged to nuclear families.

➤ *Usage of OTC Drugs*

Table 1 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants Based on Common Category of Drug Using (n=200)

Sl no	Common category of drugs using	f	%
1.	Analgesics	180	90
2.	Antacids	32	16
3.	Antihistamines	69	34.5
4.	Multivitamin	8	4
5.	Cough syrups	50	25

95% students reported using OTC drugs for last 6 months. Analgesics were most commonly used .Fever and headache were main reasons.

➤ *Level of Usage*

Table 2 Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Participants Based on Usage of Over the Counter the Drugs. (n=200)

Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low usage (0-20)	94	47%
Moderate usage (21-40)	104	52%
High usage (41-60)	2	1%
Very high usage (61-80)	0	0

➤ *Association with Demographic Variables*

A significant association was found between OTC drug usage and semester of study (p < 0.05).

of nursing in Delhi,Uttarakhand. In this study the prevalence of OTC drug use was reported at 66.6%with 50% of students medicating whenever they felt it was necessary. Furthermore 53.3% of the students utilized previous doctor’s prescription as a primary source of information.

**V. DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate a high prevalence of OTC drug usage among student nurses. Similar results were reported in a cross-sectional descriptive study conducted at state college

The most common indication for self medication in this study was fever (78%) followed by cough (45%), dysmenorrhea(23%). These results are consistent with the

findings in Gujarath by Devang parikh among 300 medical students. The study similarly identified fever (60%) and cough (60%) are the leading reasons for OTC drug uses followed by (45%)headache , (30%)dysmenorrhea , (15%) muscle pain and (6%)acidity.

In the present study majority 90% students are using analgesics ,16% students are using antacids,34% are using antihistamines,4% are using multivitamins and 25 % students using cough syrups. These findings are in congruence with findings of a study conducted among 400 medical students of pharmacy and medicine colleges of Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in Dammam, Saudi Arabia using a survey questionnaire. The prevalence of analgesics is 72.35%, antihistamines is 39.16%, and antacids use among students was found to 6.64%.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that OTC drug usage is highly prevalent among student nurses. There is a need to promote awareness regarding safe drug use and the risks associated with self-medication.

Educational interventions and stricter regulations are recommended to ensure rational use of medications.

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