Prescription medication sharing among adults in Saudi Arabia: A cross-sectional survey study

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Introduction

• Prescription medication sharing is a practice of medical and public health concern as it has been associated with numerous adverse health outcomes.1
• Successful interventions to change medicine sharing practice will require understanding of how, when and why medicines are shared.
• Despite the risks associated with this behaviour, very little is known about prescription medication sharing.1

Aim

• Examining prescription medication sharing behaviours among adults living in Saudi Arabia.

Method

Study Design

• A cross-sectional survey study.

Inclusion criteria

• An ability to communicate in Arabic or English, and
• aged ≥18 years.

Data collection

• An online survey2 was distributed to a convenient sample of 760 participants by email and social media via an internet link leading to a web-based survey platform in QuestionPro.

Data analysis

• Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 22 was used for data entry and analysis.

Results

• A total of 667 out of 934 completed the questionnaire (response rate: 71.4%).

Table 1: The top three reasons identified for borrowing prescription medications (N=90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had the same problem as the other person, and had seen a doctor about it</td>
<td>26 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ran out of the prescription medicine</td>
<td>19 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem wasn’t serious enough for me to go to the doctor</td>
<td>12 (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: The top three reasons identified for lending prescription medications (N=90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They had the same problem as me</td>
<td>50 (46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had leftovers that would have gone to waste</td>
<td>15 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They ran out of prescription medicine</td>
<td>13 (12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion and conclusion

• Twenty percent of participants revealed they would borrow a prescription medication and 32% would lend a prescription medication.
• The prevalences of borrowing and lending prescription medication were found to be 14% and 16% in 2018 (past year) respectively.
• Twenty percent of participants revealed giving a medication prescribed for one child to another child in their care, and 75% reported having leftover prescription medicine at home.
• The majority (90%) had borrowed or lent from 1-3 occasions in the past year.
• Sixty-six percent (n=59) of those who borrowed a prescription medication received instructions about medicines from the lender, and of the lenders (n=89), 81.7% gave information on medications with the lent medicines.
• Painkillers (41.4%), antibiotics (14.3%), and allergy medicine (13.6%) were the most commonly revealed borrowed and lent medicines mainly between immediate family members.
• Different reasons have been identified for medicine borrowing or lending behaviours, please see tables 1 and 2.

References