

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%).

Parameter	Results
Gender [N (%)]	Male 182 (27)
	Female 485 (73)
Age (years)	<65 648 (97)
	≥65 19 (3)
Education [N (%)]	> High school 541 (81)
	≤ High school 126 (19)
Province of current residence [N (%)]	Eastern 364 (55)
	Other 303 (45)
Number of people living in your household [N (%)]	1-3 119 (18)
	4-6 342 (51)
	≥7 206 (31)

Results

- 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.

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

Reasons	N (%)
I had the same problem as the other person, and had seen a doctor about it	26 (29)
I ran out of the prescription medicine	19 (21)
The problem wasn't serious enough for me to go to the doctor	12 (13)

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

Reasons	N (%)
They had the same problem as me	50 (46)
I had leftovers that would have gone to waste	15 (14)
They ran out of prescription medicine	13 (12)



<https://www.eahp.eu/25-5PSQ-076>

Discussion and conclusion

- Borrowing and lending prescription medications is a common practice in the Saudi population. Further research is warranted into the development of successful approaches or interventions to reduce harm resulting from medication sharing behaviour.

References

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