FACTORS THAT PROMOTE SELF-MEDICATION AMONG STUDENTS OF SCHOOL OF FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION (TECHNICAL) UMUNZE, ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This work examines the factors that promote self-medication among the students of federal college of education (Technical) Umunze. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Sample of the study was done using 300 students of NCE and BED from the six departments in the school of science. Questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The population consists of one thousand two hundred and twenty five (1,225) students. The questionnaire contained fifteen items. The instrument was validated and reliability was 0.90 using Pearson’s product coefficient. The findings revealed that the students of school of sciences federal college of Education (Technical) Umunze lack knowledge about dangers of self medication, were aware that unavailability of medical service in the college medical centers leads to self-medication and that peer group influence the attitude of students towards self medication. It was recommended among others that government should help to make drugs and medical equipment available to all the medical centers in all higher institutions to ensure faster and efficient treatment of students.

Medication involves treatment through the usage of medicine. Self-medication is a form of self care given by an individual to him or herself. Self medication as cited by Abdelmoneim (2005), Afolabi (2008), and Dayami (2009) involves the use of medical products by the consumers to treat self recognized disorders, symptoms, recurrent disease or minor health problems. It is the use of medicines by the lay person on their own initiative without professional medical supervision. Self medication is practiced widely for various reasons such as to promote health or to treat illnesses. Medicines used for self medication are referred to as non prescription medication or over the counter drugs (Davies, 2004).

Self medication is a human behaviour where individual uses unprescribed drugs to treat untreated and often undiagnosed medical ailment. Self medication is often seen as gaining personal independence from established medicine, it can be seen as a human right, implicit in or closely related to the right to refuse professional medical treatment (Altman, 2010). Self medication according to Khantzian (2003) can be defined as the usage of drugs to treat self diagnosed disorders or symptoms or the intermittent recurrent disease or symptoms. Shiite (2004) also defined self medication as the medication of oneself without professional supervision so as to alleviate an illness or condition. Self medication is a common practice especially among the low socio economic group that see it as a means of reducing cost which actually it is not.

Self medication is viewed as part of normal living (WHO, 2005). Most people do not consult doctors because of their poor standard of living; cough syrups, pain killers, ointments, tonics, vitamins, inhalers and many other similar medications are commonly found in household and their usage abused. One wonders whether these drugs improve or worsen one’s state of health. Pharmaceutical Association of Nigeria (2004) stated that factors that promote self medication include unavailability of prescribed drugs, non availability of medical knowledge or orientation, shortage of...
drugs, non availability of medical facilities and personnel around the area. Lack of trust in our medical services, peer group, parental influence and financial constraints promote self medication. When a cure is obtained through self medication, the individual may then become dependent on the drugs which may result to poisoning if not properly managed.

According to Anderson, Krolner, Holstein, Due and Hanson (2007) self medication has serious consequence such as severe illness, over dose and death. Anyone who decides how much and what kind of medicine to take without first consulting a medical personnel, is self medicating. At times people taking a particular type of drug decide to take another one mistakenly without realizing that the two have negative reaction when combined may land themselves in serious health conditions. The issue of medicines being available without prescription is nowadays generally accepted as an important part of healthcare which is in line with the growing desire of everybody to take responsibility for their health (Lau, 2005).

In view of the above situation the researcher wants to find out factors that promote self-medication among students of school of science, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze.

Statement of the Problem

Many students are ignorant and have inadequate health information about medication which may be dangerous to health. Unavailability or insufficient healthcare providers promote self medication and drug abuse/misuse which can lead to adverse drug reactions and possible fatal consequences. Considering the above, the researcher wants to find out factor that promote self-medication among students of School of Sciences Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to determine the factors that promote self medication among students of School of Science Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze. Specifically the study seeks to find out:

- Whether lack of knowledge on dangers of self mediation by students of school of sciences, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze leads to self-medication.
- If peer group influences the attitude of the students towards self medication in school of science, Federal College of education (Technical) Umunze.
- If unavailability of drugs at the medical center leads to self-medication among the students of the School of Science Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

- Do the students of School of Science, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze lack knowledge on dangers of self medication?
- Does peer group influence the attitude of students towards self-medication in School of Science Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze?
- Does unavailability of drugs at the medical centre induce students to self medication in School of Sciences, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze?

Method

A survey research design was adapted for the student. The population of the study is made up of Bachelors of Education (BED) students and Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) students of School of Sciences, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze. There are one thousand two hundred and twenty five (1,225) BED and NCE students according to the data obtained from the college admissions office for School of Science, Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze (2013). The researcher used sample size of three hundred students from the 6 Departments in the School of Science of the College. This was represented by 50 students from each department which were randomly sampled.
Reliability

The reliability of the questionnaire was established by giving the instrument to 50 students of Health and Physical Education Department, Nwafor Orizu College of Education Nsugbe to fill. The instrument was marked and scored. After two weeks the instrument was reshuffled and re-ad ministered to the same group of students. The two scores were correlated using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and found to be 0.90.

The three research questions were answered using mean scores, Mean of 2.50 and above indicated that the respondents agree with the items while mean score of less than 2.50 indicated that the respondents disagree with the item.

Research Question 1

Do the students of School of Sciences Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze lack knowledge on dangers of self-medication?

Table 1: The mean rating scores on lack of knowledge on dangers of self-medication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Self medication can lead to drug dependence</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Self medication does not lead to death</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Self medication can lead to poisoning of blood</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Self medication can lead to failure of the kidney</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Self medication does not lead to drug abuse/misuse</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean (x)**

|       | 2.53 |

Table 1 shows response of students on their knowledge about self medication. Two of the mean calculated in the five items were above 2.50 indicating acceptance while three was below. Also the grand mean was 2.53, this shows that the students lack knowledge on dangers of self medication.

Research Question 2

Does peer group influence the attitude of students towards self-medication in School of Sciences, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze.

Table 2: Respondents responses on influence of peer group on the attitude of students towards self-medication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Peer groups influences students towards self medication</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Students do not accept medication from their friends to satisfy acceptance.</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Students usage of drugs is influenced by the school community.</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Peer are influenced into self medication due to gender</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Youth advertisement on media influences students towards self medication.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean (X) —**

|       | 2.67 |

Table 2 shows that the respondents mean (x) in the three items were above 2.50 with a grand mean of 2.67 indicating acceptance.
Research Question 3: Does unavailability of drugs at the medical centre induce students to self-medication.

Table 3: The students responses on unavailability of drugs at the medical center.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Available drugs at the medical centre are very expensive.</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Many drugs desired are available at the medical centre.</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>There is shortage of drugs at the school medical centre.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>The medical personnel are friendly to the students.</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>Not accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>There is delay in treatments due to shortage of drugs.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Mean (x)</strong></td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that three of the items have mean value above 2.50 with a grand mean of 2.68. The table therefore indicates that unavailability of drugs at the medical centre induce the students towards self medication.

Discussion

The findings in table 1 show a grand mean of 2.53 which is above the established accepted mean of 2.50. The students do not know that self medication can lead to drug dependence or death. This mean(x) therefore suggests that students of School of Science, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze lack knowledge on dangers of self-medication. This is in line with the findings of Seer and Winwood (2006) that were of the view that students who patronize patent medicine dealers do not know about the dangerous side effects and that medicines have the positive and the negative effects on human body.

Table 2 revealed that peer groups influence the attitude of students of School of Science, Federal College of Education (Technical) Umunze towards self-medication. The students agree that they accept drugs to belong and also from same sex. The finding is in line with that of Oladele (2001) who cited that adjustment to drugs is greatly influenced by peer groups. Students indulge in self medication from recommendations from their friends so as to belong and thereby be accepted.

The findings in table 3 revealed that the respondents were aware that unavailability of drugs at the medical centre is a factor that influences self-medication with a grand mean of 2.63. The findings is in line with that of Alalabi (2007) who was of the view that shortage of drugs, high cost of drugs and delay in medical treatment were all problems encountered by students at school medical centres.

Conclusion

From the findings of the work, the students of School of Science, federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze lack knowledge about dangers of self medication. Peer group influences the students decision to indulge in self-medication, not taking cognizance of the fact that all drugs are chemical substances which when taken into the body system has its positive as well as negative effects. Also unavailability of drugs at the school medical centres force the students to indulge in self-medication. Self-medication is a form of drug abuse and misuse. Side effects occur from self-medication resulting to addiction, gastric irritation, frequent headache, dental caries, liver
toxicity, which is the failure of the liver due to prolonged usage of analgesics like pandadol, paracetamol, novalgine and other pain relieving tablets or even death.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this work, the following recommendations were made:

- Health personnel in the Ministries and Schools should help to educate the students on the dangers of self-medication.
- Parents, churches and other non-governmental organizations should help the youths reduce the rate of self-medication through teaching the students the adverse effects of the self-medication.
- Government should intensify the advertisement on radio, television, newspapers, bill boards and posters, on the dangers association with self medication.
- Government and other philanthropic organizations should help to make drugs and medical facilities available to school medical centres to ensure fast and efficient treatment.

**References**


