



Relationship Between Health Literacy and Self-Medication Among Students in Esfarayen City in 2023

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Self-medication is one of the most important problems in the world. Considering the adverse consequences and side effects of self-medication, it is necessary to investigate the impact of health literacy as one of the most effective factors in reducing the excessive use of medicine. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the relationship between health literacy and self-medication in students of Esfarayen City in 2023.

Methods and Materials: In this descriptive-analytical study, 366 students from Esfarayen were selected and evaluated using a random sampling method. The data were collected using the standard health literacy questionnaire for Iranian adults (HELIA), and the researcher made a questionnaire on self-medication and entered it into SPSS software. Finally, they were described and analyzed using appropriate statistical tests such as Mann-Whitney, independent-t, and Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Results: The data analysis showed that the most common sources of information on the correct use of medicine among students were the doctor (48.9%) and the Internet and social media (22.1%). The most inhibiting factor in self-medication was the fear of complications (57.9%), and the most motivating factor in self-medication was the sound and safe experience of self-medication in the past (61.7%). The most commonly used medicines were acetaminophen (77.6%) and cold pills (75.1%). Most diseases in which self-medication was done were cold (78.8%) and headache (63.1%). The statistical test results showed a significant relationship between health literacy and the Knowledge score in the field of self-medication ($p = 0.001$; $R = 0.18$) and between health literacy and the attitude score ($p = 0.001$; $R = 0.29$). However, there is no significant relationship between health literacy and performance score ($p = 0.51$; $R = -0.034$). There was a significant difference in the average score of health literacy ($p = 0.01$), Knowledge score ($p = 0.001$), and attitude score ($p = 0.001$) in the two groups of medical and non-medical science students.

Conclusion and Discussion: Considering the existence of a relationship between health literacy and the knowledge and attitude score in the field of self-medication, it is suggested to increase the health literacy of students as the young and future generation of society in the field of complications and consequences of self-medication through holding educational classes. Let us also try to improve their attitude and knowledge by monitoring the content of the Internet and social networks, which are some of the most important sources of information. In this way, we can take a step to reduce the complications and consequences of excessive use of medicine and the costs incurred by society.

Citation:

Sadeghi A, Mohammadi H, Mahmoudi Manesh M, Moradian A. Relationship Between Health Literacy and Self-Medication Among Students in Esfarayen City in 2023. *Iranian biomedical journal* 2024; 28(7): 407.

Keywords: Health literacy, Iran, Self-medication, Students

