

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**SOCIETAL KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, PERCEPTION
AND PRACTICE ON THE USE OF OVER THE
COUNTER (OTC) MEDICINES**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Self-medication can be defined as a health activity to treat oneself with or without drugs using information obtained from past health experiences, books, advices, software, websites, health advertising, radio or television programmed. Medicines for self-medication are often called non-prescription medications (NPMs) or 'over the counter' (OTC) and are available without a doctor's prescription through pharmacies.

Method: This was a descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in 4 different fast food outlets in Teluk Intan, Perak. The questionnaire was categorized into five main sections; demographic data, general attitudes on the use of NPMs or OTC medicines, perception towards NPMs or OTC medicines, general knowledge about NPMs or OTC medicines and self-medication practice. The study was conducted between March 2013 to May 2013 and a total of 148 questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents. Participation of the respondents were voluntary. Data collected were computed, coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Program (SPSS) version 20.0.

Result: Almost two-third of the respondents 64.2% were female, within the aged of 20 to 29 years old age group 59.5% and half 51.4% were Malay. Almost two-third 61.5% were single respondents, 64.2% had a college/university/others qualification and 54.1% not working. The medication most bought by the respondents are medicines indicated for headache 63.5% and cough and fever was 62.8%.

Conclusion: In conclusion, there were at least one statistically significant difference in respondent's perception, their knowledge and respondent's self medication practice with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. This indicated that NPMs or OTC medicines are an important part of the treatment of minor ailments and can be said to relieve the burden on the health care system.

Keywords: Self-medication, non-prescription medicines, over-the-counter, minor ailments

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In this modern era world, people are keen to accept more personal responsibility for their health status and to obtain as much sound information as possible from expert sources in order to help them make appropriate decisions in health care. Self-care is a lifelong habit and culture (World Self-Medication Industry - Self-Medication Principles, 2006). The expertise and support provided by health professionals is crucial to making self-care work. The profile of self-care has dramatically increased in recent years and is largely government-driven, consumer fuelled and professionally supported (Rutter, 2012). It is a broad concept encompassing self-medication (World Self-Medication Industry - Self-Medication Principles, 2006).

Self-medication is that the treatment of common health issues with medicines particularly designed and labelled to be used while not medical management and approved as safe and effective for such use (Khan, 2011). Self-medication can be defined as the health activities to treat oneself with or without drugs using information obtained from past health experiences, books, advices, software, websites, health advertising, radio or television programme (World Self-Medication Industry - Self-Medication Principles, 2006). Self-medication is a vital part of daily self-care behaviour and one with all the important problems beneath discussion in