

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UiTM)

**SELF-MEDICATION PRACTICES WITH OVER-
THE-COUNTER (OTC) MEDICATIONS AMONG
MALAYSIAN ELDERLY IN KOTA BHARU,
KELANTAN**

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ABSTRACT

Minor ailments or illnesses defined as everyday aches and ills suffered from time to time, not a continuous medical problem. They are considered as short-term lasting and do not require doctor's major attention. So, in order to treat or medicate these illnesses, consumers tend to buy medicines from pharmacy stores or other applicable stores. This practice is known as self-medication and the products used are known as over-the-counter (OTC) medications. There is less awareness about this practice in elderly or geriatrics aged 65 years old and above about the danger if the practice is not in a good manner. Also, there is lack of published data about this practice among geriatrics in our country. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the practice of self-medication with OTC medications to treat minor ailments among geriatrics aged 65 years old and above. Due to certain limitations and in order to secure the validity of the results, the items inside the questionnaires were asked directly to the geriatrics (respondents). Part A of the questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic and medical data, while part B consisted of five main sections. Each of the section was created to address certain purposes. Besides descriptive analysis, inferential analysis as such chi square test was used where applicable, and $p < 0.05$ was considered as statistically significant. Total of 250 respondents in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, were recruited in this study. Majority of the respondents were female with mean (\pm SD) age of 67.75 (2.29) years old, Malay, married, live with family, completed highest level of education in university/college/diploma, employed, obtained monthly income of between RM 501 - RM 999, did not have health insurance and taking prescribed medications. The prevalence and perspectives of OTC self-medication practices among geriatrics were well understood. The outcomes of this study can be used in further research and development projects either by governments or individuals. Until this moment, there is no data available about the patterns and prevalence of self-medication practices with OTC products among elderly in Malaysia. Therefore, this study is sought to expose essential information in order to create awareness not only among geriatrics but general public in order to continue the self-medication practices in a good and safe comportment.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The eagerness to maintain the healthy body is best described as healthcare. In Malaysia, healthcare has undergone some holistic transformations. This healthcare system consists of healthcare providers such as medical doctors, pharmacists and other healthcare professionals. In Ireland (1980's until 1990's), healthcare practices resulted in high expenditures among their citizens which was almost quadrupled. This was because the consumers tend to manage their own health by taking individual responsibility for it. Self-medication is an important element in Irish population and market for pharmaceutical products. It was valued at 273 million Euros. The leading medication area of the market were analgesics which was 79.9 million Euros, while 49.7 million Euros for cold treatments. If converted in percentages, out of 273 million Euros, 28% comprised of analgesics, 18% for cough and cold, 17% for skin treatment, 12% for digestives and intestinal remedies, 13% for vitamins and minerals and others contributing 12% ((IPHA), 2012).

In order to self-medicate, people must possess some minor ailments. Minor ailment is defined as the everyday aches and ills suffered from time to time. These minor ailments are considered as not a necessarily serious matter and short-term lasting only and do not require major doctor's attention. The examples of minor ailments are cold and flu, cough and sore throat, headache, indigestion, minor aches and pain,