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THE PRACTICE OF SELF-MEDICATION: A SURVEY OF PORT HARCOURT CITY

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Abstract

The study examined the issue of self-medication as is practiced in the city of Port Harcourt. It seeks to comprehend the various ailments and drugs as well as the rationale behind personal prescription of over the counter (OTC) drugs. The study is purely a descriptive survey and a structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 300 respondents using a convenient sampling technique. The data was analyzed using percentages, bars, charts and scaling techniques. The study revealed that pains/headaches, malaria, microbial infections, fever and cough/cold were top on the lists of ailment leading to self-medication. It also showed that drugs such as ibuprofen, anti-malaria drugs, antibiotics, especially Ampiclox and Ampicillin were mostly used by individuals to self-medicate. More so, the study revealed that urgency of the need, more or less time, lack of funds or money to consult a physician and proximity of the pharmacies underscored personal adherence to self-medication. The study has shown that besides the lack of public health knowledge, the practice of self-medication in Port Harcourt city is socio-economically determined. The study recommends a nationwide enlightenment campaign on the dangers of self-medication as well as more scholarships for studying medicine to close the ratio gap of medical doctors to the population.

Key Words: Self-medication, Port Harcourt City, Self-care, Physician, antibiotics, anti-malaria, Prescription, over the counter drugs (OTC).
