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Self doctors: A figment of the imagination or a bad omen for the future

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ABSTRACT

Recent advancements in the medical science promoted good health practice in developed nations however the developing countries like Pakistan are struggling with their debilitated health care system which has malformed the patients formerly dependant on health care professionals for their health outcomes to assume the role of self doctors which is aided by availability of prescription medications as OTC for example antibiotics. This malpractice of becoming self doctors treating self ailments by self medication is a figment of imagination for maintaining good health in the minds of the patients however it is actually a bad omen for their healthy future.

Key words: Self doctors, self medication, Pakistan

In this modern era of medical science, the developing countries are still facing hurdles in promoting health and wellness in the population. Pakistan being a developing country is struggling to equip its health care system with the modern facilities. With respect to the logistics and availability of medicines in the country, apart from the OTC drugs which are available at every store including pharmacies and non-pharmacies. Antibiotics have joined the league of OTC products as well. With no proper pharmacovigilence system in practice, the concept of treating illness or disease without any proper consultation from doctors or health care provider is boosting up the patients' confidence to become self doctors which is adding to the disgrace of health care system in Pakistan. This practice i.e. becoming a self doctor, is a malpractice which is harmful and posses a potential to create a medical crisis among the masses. This

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practice will not only indulge them in polypharmacy and add to economic burden but increase the possibility of experiencing an adverse drug event ADE.

The use of antibiotic by people without any consultation from health care professionals is a dicey play. Infections can be bacterial, viral, fungal or protozoal which uneducated patients do not recognize. Proper diagnosis by a physician and culture sensitivity reports provides a way better treatment options for patients. But by the self medication of antibiotic, the self doctor patient eliminates every single safety check for the treatment. It is progressively becoming a trend in Pakistan to become a self doctor and not to visit a physician or pharmacist. By asking other people and from previous experiences self doctor patients start an antibiotic therapy on their own. This practice not only encompasses the uneducated people but also the educated ones, students are also a part of this irrational new order. Studies conducted on the self medication of students have reported the event and concluded that there is a need to educate all segments of population regarding the issue and its tribulations and for improving the health care system in Pakistan in general (Syed Nabeel Zafar et al. 2008).

Use of antibiotic without clinical indication and culture sensitivity tests CST results in adverse events. As a result of the irrational therapy, resistant strains develop and promote resistance to the medication in the community. One of studies conducted shows the resistant strains of microbes in pneumococcal infections in children (Mastro et al. 1991; Syed Imran Ali et al. 2014).

The reason for the increasing trend of this malpractice in Pakistan is the incapacitated health care system, the inability to equip state of the art facilities, run health awareness campaigns and promotes wellness among the masses by incorporating the pharmacists in the system has led the patients isolated and desolated in response to which they have taken the role of becoming self doctors which in their opinion is the solution however it is a figment of their imagination and a bad omen for their healthy future.

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