Title: The Prevalence of Self-medication and Its Effective and Alterable Factors Based on the Health Belief Model Among the Elderly Adults in Gonabad in 2009

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Abstract: Background and Aim: Maintaining health is one of the main and old concerns for man and is under the influence of various factors. In this regard, the universal declarations and strategies related to health put emphasis on the provision and proper consumption of drugs and the use of effective treatment. In Iran, self-medication is one of the controversial health issues and not only does exist three times more than the world average record but also enjoys the second ranking in Asia. Investigating the causes of self-medication based on Health Belief Model (HBM) is one of the scientific and effective remedies to control this problem. Thus, this study is an attempt to identify the factors associated with self-medication through determining their extent of influence so that these factors could be ranked in order to be effective.

Methods: In this cross-sectional descriptive-analytic study, 380 elderly adults were selected based on stratified random sampling with proper ratios. The data were collected through structured interview using a 47 item questionnaire which covered the HBM subsections. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were calculated. The data were analyzed through SPSS software version 16.

Results: Having analyzed the data, the following results emerged: the age average of the elderly adults was 66 ± 5.31, 36.10% of them were retired, 29.40% had an education of primary school level, 53.90% were under the support of social insurance, 77.60% consumed over-the-counter drugs, 85.30% kept drugs at home, 42.30% took sedative drugs, and 15.10% consumed psychiatric drugs. The score for perceived sensitivity and barriers were 50.21 and 70.23, respectively.

The results indicated that there was a significant relationship among the gender, marital status, and schooling. Also, having previous experience and considering the drugs as harmless were found to be the main cause of self-medication. Further, the mass media were discovered to be the most effective solution to prevent self-medication.

Conclusion: In this study, the self-medication prevalence was high, and the alterable factors were in undesirable conditions. The subjects did not show a minimum score of 50% in the different subsections of HBM, but the self-efficacy average was significant a finding which caused a kind of false supposition which, in turn, led to an increase in self-medication.

Self-medication, elderly adults, HBM Model, Gonabad

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