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## Public, Pharmacists, and Physicians' Views on Over-the-Counter Drugs: A Comparative Analysis

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### Abstract:

**Background:** Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs play a crucial role in managing minor ailments and promoting self-care practices among individuals. Understanding the perspectives and practices of various stakeholders, including pharmacists, physicians, and the general public, is essential for promoting safe and responsible use of OTC medications. This study aims to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding OTC drugs among pharmacists, physicians, and the general public, identify differences among these groups, and provide insights for targeted interventions. **Methods:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 150 participants, including pharmacists, physicians, and the general public. Participants were assessed using a structured questionnaire covering demographic information, knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to OTC drugs. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and chi-square tests to identify differences among groups. **Results:** Pharmacists demonstrated significantly higher levels of knowledge and safer practices regarding OTC drugs compared to physicians and the general public. However, no significant differences were found in attitudes among the three groups. Specific areas of concern include uncertainty regarding safety, usage, expiry dates, potential side effects, and storage practices of OTC drugs across all participant groups. **Conclusion:** The study highlights the need for targeted educational interventions to address knowledge gaps and promote safe practices regarding OTC drugs among pharmacists, physicians, and the general public. Strategies to improve communication and collaboration among stakeholders, such as enhanced pharmacist counselling and public awareness campaigns, are essential for promoting responsible OTC drug use and ensuring better health outcomes for all.

**Key words:** Over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, Cross-sectional survey, Descriptive statistics, Analysis of variance (ANOVA), Statistical package for social science (SPSS)

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