

Impact of Prescription Drug Abuse

Zeyad.M.Alsharif¹, Loai.T.Alharbi¹, Majed.O.Alharbi¹, Basim.S.Alsurihi¹,
Fahad.M.Alotaibi², Ali.A.Alzahrani³, Mohammed.S.Alkhuzaee²,
Hassan.A.Alsahabi⁴, Ahmad.A.Bazaid⁵, Khaled.M.Almehmadi⁶

Pharmacy technician – branch of MOH in Mecca in compliance department¹

Pharmacy technician- Executive management of supply chains in the Mecca cluster²

Assistant pharmacist - Executive management of supply chains in the Mecca cluster³

Pharmacist - Executive management of supply chains in the Mecca cluster⁴

Pharmacy technician – branch of MOH in Mecca in Medical supply⁵

Pharmacist-Maternity and children Hospital in Mecca⁶

Abstracts

The current study aims to know the impact of misuse of prescription medications, the impact of medications on human health, and the types of medications that affect human health. A questionnaire was prepared via Google Drive and distributed to the population between the ages of 25-55 years, men and women, in the two cities of Mecca. As for the questionnaire, it was distributed via the social networking program (WhatsApp). 550 questionnaires were distributed, and 540 answers were obtained via email to the researcher. It concluded that anyone with a prescription for medication, should be aware of how to secure, count, and Properly dispose of unused medications. It concluded that the misuse of medications must be strictly monitored, especially for the elderly, and emphasis must be placed on their misuse by adolescents and the elderly for fear of addiction.

Keywords: impact, of prescription, drug abuse.

1. Introduction

prescription drug use is on the rise in the United States. With that comes a rise in abuse and misuse, especially among the elderly as they are more likely to be taking prescription medications. Individuals 65 years and older account for one-third of all medications prescribed, which is disproportionate to the percentage of the population that they represent, approximately 13% of the population in the United States. Furthermore, the number of people over 65 taking three or more prescription drugs increased from about one-third in 1988 to almost one-half in 2000 (1). Drug misuse and abuse in the elderly is of special concern because it can cause cognitive and physical impairment—putting this population at greater risk for falls, motor vehicle accidents, and making them generally less able to care for their daily needs

Elderly individuals are particularly vulnerable to prescription drug misuse. Misuse is defined

as non-adherence to prescription directions and can be either willful or accidental. Nonadherence may place an undue burden on social services through increased use of medical resources (physician visits, lab tests, hospital admissions etc.), and more importantly, from the individual's perspective, treatment failure can result. Patterns of abuse, where prescription drugs that are not medically necessary are taken intentionally, are also seen in seniors. Prescription drug abuse is present in 12% to 15% of elderly individuals who seek medical attention. In addition to the toll on individuals and families, abuse places a heavy financial toll on health care systems. Health problems related to substance abuse cost Medicare \$233 million dollars in 1989, and probably account for much larger expenditures today. And, experts estimate that the issue is underdiagnosed in seniors; although 60% of substance abuse is recognized in patients younger than 60, only 37% is recognized in patients over the age of 60(2). In the first part of this Prevention Tactic series on prescription drug abuse, the focus was on youth. For youth, ages 12-17, prescription drugs have become the second most abused illegal drug behind marijuana. Whereas youth are using prescription drugs to get high, party, or as a study aid, senior citizens, the focus of this issue, are more inclined towards inadvertent misuse. Abuse or misuse of prescription drugs is second only to alcohol abuse in this over 65 demographic. The most common prescription medications abused include opiates, central nervous system depressants, and stimulants due to their addictive qualities (3). Among the elderly the primary substances of abuse include benzodiazepines for anxiety and insomnia, pain relievers for arthritis and hip fractures, as well as alcohol, and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, all of which can have adverse reactions when mixed with other drugs or alcohol.

Elderly drug misuse and abuse: a hidden issue Elderly drug misuse and abuse has largely been a hidden issue that has only recently been given attention in the health field. Some reasons for this include the following: many of the symptoms of misuse and abuse mirror common signs of aging in general. These symptoms may obscure diagnosing a substance abuse problem. Some of these perceptions include: memory loss, disorientation, Lack of balance, shaky hands, mood swings, depression, chronic boredom. A problem of this scale and consequence requires

a collaborative approach. Community leaders, law enforcement officers, health care practitioners—such as physicians, pharmacists, and nurses, as well as community-based programs and coalitions—all play critical roles (4).

2. Material and Methods:

The study began in (the city of Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), and the study ended with writing the data collection in June 2024. The researcher used descriptive analysis, an approach that uses quantitative or qualitative description of the social phenomenon (Impact of prescription drug abuse) the independent variable (the percentage of types of medicines that are abused by people in general) and the dependent variable (the percentage of antibiotics that are abused among people). This type of study is characterized by analysis, reason, objectivity, and reality. It is also concerned with individuals and societies, as it studies the variables and their impact on the health of the individual, society, and the consumer, and the spread of diseases and

their relationship. For demographic variables such as age, gender, nationality, and marital status. Status and occupation (5), and use the excel 2010 Office suite hitographpic to sort the results (6). The questionnaire is a wonderful and useful tool for collecting a huge amount of data, but the researchers were not able to conduct personal interviews with the participants in the online survey, the questionnaire was only answered electronically, the questionnaire consists of eleven questions, all of which are closed-ended.

3. Results and discussion:

The percentage of approval to participate in the questionnaire was 100%, and the average age of participants was as follows: from the age of 25-34 years, and also from the age of 35-44 years (both are the same rate, 42.95%), and from the age of 45-55 years, it was 14.3%. The gender of the participants is as follows: the percentage of males is 78.6% and the percentage of females is 21.4%, and their nationalities are Saudi men and women. 100%, and their professions were male and female government administrators by 78.6%, and of the male and female technicians (health staff) 21.4%, as for the educational status, it was as follows: holders of primary, intermediate, and secondary certificates. Doctorate degree 0%, diploma 28.6%, master's degree 21.4%, university degree 50%. As for the questionnaire questions, they were as follows: First question: Using a prescription medication contrary to the instructions of the doctor who prescribed it? Yes and no (both are the same percentage, 50%), and I don't know, 0%. The second question: Drug misuse also includes what is also called prescription drug addiction? Yes, 76.6%, No, 14.3%, and I don't know, 0%. Question three: Many drug abuse behaviors, such as taking prescription painkillers? Yes 78.6%, No 21.4%, and I don't know 0%. Question four: Is snorting crushed tablets or taking them by injection to feel euphoric considered a form of drug abuse? Yes 85.7%, No 7.2%, and I don't know 7.1%. Question 5: May misuse of prescription medications become a persistent and compulsive disorder, despite its negative consequences? Yes, 78.6%, No, 7.1%, and I don't know, 14.3%. Question six: One of the growing problems is the potential for misuse of prescription drugs to affect all age groups, including teenagers? Yes 92.9%, No 0%, and I don't know 7.1%. Question 7: The most commonly abused medications are opioid analgesics, anxiolytics, sedatives and stimulants? Yes, 85.7%, No, 0%, and I don't know, 14.3%. Question eight: Symptoms of misuse of prescription medications: constipation, nausea, feeling high, slow breathing rate, drowsiness, confusion, poor motor coordination, increasing the dose needed to relieve pain, worsening or increasing sensitivity to pain. With higher doses? Yes, 85.7%, No, 7.2%, and I don't know, 7.1%. Question nine: tranquilizers and anti-anxiety medications: such as drowsiness, confusion, unbalanced walking, stuttering, poor concentration, dizziness, memory problems, slow breathing? Yes 78.6%, No 14.3%, and I do not know 7.8%. Question 10: Teenagers and adults misuse prescription medications for several reasons, including: feeling pleasure or euphoria, relaxing and relieving tension, relieving pain, weakening the appetite for food, increasing attention, experiencing the mental effects of the active substance, continuing the addiction, refusing to abstain from using? Yes, 78.6%, No, 21.4%, and I don't know, 0%. Final question: Other possible consequences of drug abuse include: engaging in risky behaviors due to poor judgment, using recreational or illicit drugs, committing crimes, being involved in car

accidents, poor performance in school or work, relationship disturbances? Yes 64.3%, No 0%, and I don't know 35.7%.

Table.1: Impact of prescription drug abuse according to participates

| Impact of prescription drug abuse | Yes | No | I don't know |
|--|-------|-------|--------------|
| Symptoms of misuse of prescription medications: constipation, nausea, feeling high, slow breathing rate, drowsiness, confusion, poor motor coordination, increasing the dose needed to relieve pain, worsening or increasing sensitivity to pain. With higher doses? | 85.7% | 7.2% | 7.1% |
| tranquilizers and anti-anxiety medications: such as drowsiness, confusion, unbalanced walking, stuttering, poor concentration, dizziness, memory problems, slow breathing? | 78.6% | 14.3% | 7.8% |
| : Teenagers and adults misuse prescription medications for several reasons, including: feeling pleasure or euphoria, relaxing and relieving tension, relieving pain, weakening the appetite for food, increasing attention, experiencing the mental effects of the active substance, continuing the addiction, refusing to abstain from using? | 78.6% | 21.4% | 0% |
| Other possible consequences of drug abuse include: engaging in risky behaviors due to poor judgment, using recreational or illicit drugs, committing crimes, being involved in car accidents, poor performance in school or work, relationship disturbances? | 64.3% | 0% | 35.7% |

There is a study entitled (The Elderly and Prescription Drug Misuse and Abuse) in 2008 by Belinda Basca, which found that the use of prescription medications for non-medical use is increasing at an alarming rate. Nationally, prescription drugs are the second most widely misused and abused substance. Regardless of demographics, there are some universal prevention measures that could have a widespread benefit. Anyone with a prescription for medication should be informed on how to secure, count, and properly dispose of unused medication. Doctors and pharmacists can be trained on predictors of medication non-adherence, as well as “doctor shopping” and other forms of fraud. Any well-rounded effort will address the factors that drive all substance abuse: dose, route of administration, co-administration with other drugs, context of use, and expectations. Moreover, for the older adult population, addressing the factors related to willful and inadvertent misuse of prescription medication is a necessary part of prevention and early intervention.

4. Conclusion:

Symptoms of prescription drug misuse: constipation, nausea, feeling high, slow breathing rate, drowsiness, confusion, poor motor coordination, increased dosage needed to relieve pain, worsening or increased sensitivity to pain. Higher doses by 85.7% and misuse of medications such as tranquilizers and anti-anxiety medications: such as drowsiness, confusion, unbalanced walking, stuttering, poor concentration, dizziness, memory problems, and slow breathing 78.6%, teenagers and adults misuse medical drugs for several reasons, including: feeling pleasure or euphoria, relaxing and relieving stress, relieving pain, weakening appetite for food, increasing attention, experiencing the mental effects of the active substance, continuing addiction, and refusing to abstain. Of use 78.6%. Other possible consequences of drug abuse include: engaging

in risky behaviors due to poor judgment, using recreational or illicit drugs, committing crimes, being involved in car accidents, poor performance at school or work, and relationship disorders 64.3%.

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