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Patient reasons for obtaining psychotropic medications without a prescription at retail Pharmacies in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

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People in developing countries are obtaining prescription only medications from community pharmacies without seeking medical advice. Pharmacists are dispensing prescription only medications in general without prescription in Saudi Arabia. This is an observational, quantitative and cross-sectional study that was carried out from November 2014 to August 2015. When piloting the study, all retail pharmacies workers refused to collaborate afraid from legal consequences. Then, we start collecting convenient sample from internet users and visitors of some retail pharmacies, governmental and private psychiatric clinics. The Study included Arabic speakers who are ≥ 18 years old, have used at least one psychotropic medication without a prescription in the past 4 weeks and live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. 302 participants were included. The majority (31.8%) used Escitalopram and 38.7% used the medication/s for more than a year. 552 medications were used by 302 participants with a mean of 1.83 medication per participant. Respondents reported taking the medications mainly to treat symptoms of “feeling sad or depressed” (57.6%) and “General anxiety” (41.4%). Family and friends was the most common source of information relied on by the respondents about the chosen medication (36.8%). 66.6% obtained the medication by asking the pharmacist its name. Among the reasons given for taking psychotropic medications without a prescription, (42.4%) felt that their symptoms were not serious enough to require the help of a physician. Using the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD-7) scales, the percentage of depression and anxiety among the participants were (46.0%) and (41.7%), respectively.

Biography

Fay Alruwais is a student at king saud university in the college of medicine. He is a Co-author in a Psychiatry research under the supervision of Dr. Fahad Alosaimi. He is also a Data Collector in a research under the supervision of Prof. Ahmed Bahammam.

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