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CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN ACUTE DIARRHEA TREATMENT: ANALYZING TRUST IN PHARMACY EMPLOYEES

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ABSTRACT

Pharmacy employees play a critical role in managing minor ailments, including acute diarrhea and they are essential to ensuring the safe use of medicines and contribute significantly to public health education.

The study aim is to evaluate the role of pharmacy employees in managing minor ailment, with a specific focus on acute diarrhea. The study also explored consumer behavior in seeking treatment for diarrhea, the extent of reliance on pharmacy employees for advice, and the factors influencing consumer trust in community pharmacy services.

A survey was conducted between 2019 and the first trimester of 2021, involving 383 pharmacy consumers from various regions of Republic of Armenia, including Yerevan. The study was quantitative and the questionnaire developed based on the World Health Organization's standard guidelines. Data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical software package, employing descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficient to examine relationships between characteristics.

The results of research indicated that a considerable proportion of respondents had doctor-diagnosed health disease, while others reported no such diagnoses despite believing they had various diseases. Frequent community pharmacy visits were common, with a significant number of respondents purchasing medicines multiple times per month. Acute diarrhea and gastrointestinal disorders emerged as some of the most commonly self-managed conditions, often without specialist consultation. Only a small percent of consumers sought advice from pharmacy employees during case of diarrhea, with many relying instead on previous experience or non-professional sources.

The study highlighted general reluctance to seek professional advice from pharmacy employees, largely due to mistrust and past negative experiences. This behavior can result in irrational treatment, delayed medical intervention, and the misuse of medicines, particularly antibiotics. The findings underscore the need for enhanced public education and stronger engagement between community pharmacy employees and consumers to promote safer and more informed use of medicines.

KEYWORDS: *pharmacy employee, acute diarrhea, pharmacy consumer, trust*

INTRODUCTION

As the most accessible healthcare professionals, pharmacy employees have significant potential to provide primary healthcare services. The

role of pharmaceutical consultation is becoming increasingly important, especially with the growing prevalence of self-medication, where the phar-

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