

Factors Influencing Self-Medication / Over-The-Counter Medicines – An Empirical Study in Tiruppur District

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Abstract—Self-medication has emerged as a common healthcare practice, specifically developing countries are highly impacted with self-medication. Where health-care services cost, time and medical professionals are fewer. 'Over-the-Counter (OTC)' medication too. Some of the medicines are permitted to be sold Over-the-Counter without Doctor's prescription. Consumers perceive self-medication as a convenient, time-saving, and cost-effective alternate source to medical professional, because of the cost involved in minor illnesses. The growing emphasis on personal responsibility for health management has further encouraged individuals to adopt self-care practices, including the use of OTC medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes responsible self-medication as an important component of self-care and healthcare systems. According to WHO, when practiced appropriately, self-medication can help prevent and treat minor ailments, reduce pressure on healthcare facilities, and improve the efficient utilization of healthcare resources. However, WHO also emphasizes the need for consumer education, proper regulation of medicine sales, and pharmacist guidance to ensure the safe and rational use of medicines. In India, self-medication / OTC medication has is increasingly prevalent due to the mushroom growth of pharmacies, increased literacy, urbanization, and raising healthcare expenditure. Consumers often purchase medicines directly from pharmacies to manage common health problems without seeking medical advice. Factors such as previous experience with similar illnesses, recommendations from pharmacists, family influence, and media advertisements significantly influence consumers' self-medication practices. The expansion of online pharmacies and digital health information platforms has further facilitated easy access to medicines and healthcare-related information. Consumer perception and satisfaction play a crucial role in determining the adoption and continued use of OTC medicines. The increasing reliance on self-medication and OTC medicines highlights the need for systematic research to understand consumer behaviour, awareness, purchasing patterns, factors influencing medicine selection, and satisfaction levels.

Index Terms—Self-Medication, OTC-Medication, Consumer Perception, Health-care, WHO (World Health Organisation), self-care practices, online pharmacies, digital health information platforms.

I. INTRODUCTION

Self-medication has emerged as a common healthcare practice, specifically developing countries are highly impacted with self-medication. Where health-care services cost, time and medical professionals are fewer. Self-medication refers to the purchase of medicines by self-prescription for the known illness or symptoms, or minor health issues, this includes 'Over-the-Counter (OTC)' medication too. Some of the medicines are permitted to be sold Over-the-Counter without Doctor's prescription. These medicines are permitted because they are safe and have no-side effects, mostly these medicines are sold as 'Firs-Aid', some of the sickness are common cold, head-ache, fever, indigestion, allergy, minor wound, and pain. In recent years, self-medication / or OTC medicine consumption has been increasing due to the increase in cost of healthcare, health consciousness, easy accessibility to medicines, increased advertisements, on-line pharmacies, etc.

Consumers perceive self-medication as a convenient, time-saving, and cost-effective alternate source to medical professional, because of the cost involved in minor illnesses. The growing emphasis on personal responsibility for health management has further encouraged individuals to adopt self-care practices, including the use of OTC medicines. The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes responsible self-medication as an important component of self-care and healthcare systems. According to WHO,

when practiced appropriately, self-medication can help prevent and treat minor ailments, reduce pressure on healthcare facilities, and improve the efficient utilization of healthcare resources. However, WHO also emphasizes the need for consumer education, proper regulation of medicine sales, and pharmacist guidance to ensure the safe and rational use of medicines.

In India, self-medication / OTC medication has been increasingly prevalent due to the mushroom growth of pharmacies, increased literacy, urbanization, and raising healthcare expenditure. Consumers often purchase medicines directly from pharmacies to manage common health problems without seeking medical advice. Factors such as previous experience with similar illnesses, recommendations from pharmacists, family influence, and media advertisements significantly influence consumers' self-medication practices. The expansion of online pharmacies and digital health information platforms has further facilitated easy access to medicines and healthcare-related information. Consumer perception and satisfaction play a crucial role in determining the adoption and continued use of OTC medicines. The increasing reliance on self-medication and OTC medicines highlights the need for systematic research to understand consumer behaviour, awareness, purchasing patterns, factors influencing medicine selection, and satisfaction levels.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ayele et al. (2018) found that community pharmacy professionals in Gondar, Ethiopia, frequently dispensed medications for minor ailments but often failed to conduct adequate patient assessments, leading to inappropriate practices such as unnecessary antibiotic dispensing. The study concluded that deficiencies in clinical training, regulatory oversight, and public awareness contributed to suboptimal pharmaceutical care, highlighting the need for improved pharmacist training and stronger measures to promote rational medicine use and patient safety. Listya and Alversia (2018) found that consumers widely use OTC medicines and herbal remedies due to their convenience, affordability, and perceived safety for treating minor ailments. However, inadequate knowledge regarding proper usage, dosage, and

potential risks highlighted the need for greater consumer education and stronger regulatory measures to promote safe and informed self-medication practices. Sirak Tesfamariam, Indermeet Singh Anand, et al. (2019) found that self-medication with OTC drugs was highly prevalent among pharmacy customers, with a large proportion engaging in risky practices such as improper dosing and medicine use. The study highlighted the influence of demographic and knowledge-related factors on unsafe self-medication behaviour and emphasized the need for enhanced public education, awareness, and regulatory measures to promote the safe and rational use of OTC medicines. Yoshita Paliwal et al. (2019) found that older adults generally viewed OTC medications as safe and effective and often based their medication choices on personal experience, physician recommendations, cost, and symptom relief. However, concerns regarding inappropriate use and potential adverse effects highlighted the need for better consumer education and stronger communication between older adults and healthcare providers to ensure safe self-medication practices. Divya L. M. T., E. P. Kumar, G. M. Sulaiman, and P. Monika (2020) found that self-medication with OTC medicines is widely practiced for managing minor ailments due to convenience, cost savings, and prior experience. However, the persistence of inappropriate practices, such as using leftover medicines and improper dosage adherence, highlighted the need for greater public awareness and professional guidance to ensure the safe and rational use of OTC medications. Kebede M. Bekele et al. (2020) found that pharmacy and medical students generally possessed good knowledge and positive attitudes toward the appropriate use of OTC medicines. Despite their awareness of potential risks, self-medication remained common among students for treating minor ailments, indicating the need for continued education and awareness programs to promote rational and safe use of OTC drugs.

Sánchez-Sánchez et al. (2021) found that OTC drug consumption was highly prevalent among the Spanish population, particularly among younger individuals, women, students, and urban residents, with analgesics being the most commonly used medications. The study highlighted concerns about self-medication without medical necessity and recommended improving health literacy, public awareness, and

regulatory oversight to ensure the safe and responsible use of OTC medicines. Joachim Wangler and Martin Janský (2021) found that primary care patients widely used OTC medicines for managing minor health conditions due to their convenience and accessibility. While many patients practiced responsible self-medication, variations in risk awareness and reliance on informal information sources highlighted the need for enhanced patient education and stronger healthcare provider guidance to promote the safe and rational use of OTC medications. Fathima John Basha, Tamilchelvan, and Kumar (2022) found that self-medication was highly prevalent among the urban fisherman population in Puducherry, primarily driven by previous illness experiences and easy access to allopathic medicines. The study highlighted the significant influence of pharmacists and demographic factors on self-medication behaviour and emphasized the need for greater public awareness, responsible drug use education, and stricter regulation to minimize health risks and prevent irrational medication practices. Ishpa Shapiah Abdullah et al. (2022) found that university and college students generally possessed good knowledge and positive attitudes toward OTC medicines. However, the presence of certain unsafe practices and reliance on informal information sources highlighted the need for targeted educational programs and awareness initiatives to encourage responsible self-medication and the safe use of OTC drugs.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The increasing availability of Over-the-Counter (OTC) medicines and the rising cost of healthcare services have encouraged consumers to engage in self-medication for the treatment of minor ailments. In India, consumers frequently purchase medicines directly from pharmacies without consulting healthcare professionals, relying instead on previous experiences, pharmacist recommendations, advertisements, and information from family and friends. While OTC medicines offer convenience, affordability, and quick access to treatment, inappropriate use may result in adverse drug reactions, incorrect self-diagnosis, and irrational medication practices. Despite the growing prevalence of self-medication, limited attention has been given to understanding the psychological factors that influence

consumers' OTC medicine purchase decisions. Factors such as attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and perceived risk may significantly affect consumers' perceptions and buying behaviour. Therefore, this study seeks to examine consumers buying behaviour towards OTC medicines, with a focus on identifying the key determinants factors influencing purchase decisions and self-medication practices.

IV. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- ☞ To inquire the attitude of the consumers towards Self-Medication/Over-the-Counter Mediation.
- ☞ To assess the perception the consumers towards Self-Medication/Over-the-Counter Mediation.
- ☞ To find-out the factors influencing Self-Medication/Over-the-Counter Mediation.

V. ANALYSIS

Table - 1

| AGE | Frequency | Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| 21-30 | 122 | 18.7 |
| 31-40 | 114 | 17.4 |
| 41-50 | 84 | 12.8 |
| 51-60 | 170 | 26.0 |
| ABOVE 60 | 164 | 25.1 |
| Total | 654 | 100.0 |
| GENDER | Frequency | Percent |
| MALE | 379 | 58.0 |
| FEMALE | 275 | 42.0 |
| Total | 654 | 100.0 |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 2

| RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 2573.431 | 653 | 3.941 | 8.852 | 0.000 |
| Within People | Between Items | 3.381 | 4 | .845 | | |
| | Residual | 249.419 | 2612 | .095 | | |
| | Total | 252.800 | 2616 | .097 | | |
| Total | | 2826.231 | 3269 | .865 | | |
| Grand Mean = 4.10 | | | | | | |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 3

| FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE OF SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 1027.488 | 653 | 1.573 | 4.243 | 0.001 |
| Within People | Between Items | 9.479 | 5 | 1.896 | | |
| | Residual | 1458.854 | 3265 | .447 | | |
| | Total | 1468.333 | 3270 | .449 | | |
| Total | | 2495.822 | 3923 | .636 | Grand Mean = 4.52 | |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 4

| ACCEPTANCE TOWARDS BUYING MEDICINES THROUGH SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 105.361 | 653 | .161 | 3.465 | 0.001 |
| Within People | Between Items | .969 | 7 | .138 | | |
| | Residual | 182.656 | 4571 | .040 | | |
| | Total | 183.625 | 4578 | .040 | | |
| Total | | 288.986 | 5231 | .055 | Grand Mean = 0.94 | |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 5

| PHARMACIST ADVICE - SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICATION | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 2281.944 | 653 | 3.495 | 12.190 | 0.000 |
| Within People | Between Items | .307 | 3 | .102 | | |
| | Residual | 16.443 | 1959 | .008 | | |
| | Total | 16.750 | 1962 | .009 | | |
| Total | | 2298.694 | 2615 | .879 | Grand Mean = 4.21 | |
| ADVERTISEMENT INFLUENCE – SELF MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 2218.444 | 653 | 3.397 | 6.235 | 0.000 |
| Within People | Between Items | .267 | 3 | .089 | | |
| | Residual | 27.983 | 1959 | .014 | | |
| | Total | 28.250 | 1962 | .014 | | |

| Total | 2246.694 | 2615 | .859 | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| Grand Mean = 4.21 | | | | | | |
| PAST EXPERIENCE - SELF MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 2475.302 | 653 | 3.791 | 18.757 | 0.000 |
| Within People | Between Items | .775 | 3 | .258 | | |
| | Residual | 26.975 | 1959 | .014 | | |
| | Total | 27.750 | 1962 | .014 | | |
| Total | | 2503.052 | 2615 | .957 | Grand Mean = 4.19 | |
| PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR - SELF MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | | | | | | |
| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig |
| Between People | | 2204.944 | 653 | 3.377 | 12.025 | 0.000 |
| Within People | Between Items | .646 | 3 | .215 | | |
| | Residual | 35.104 | 1959 | .018 | | |
| | Total | 35.750 | 1962 | .018 | | |
| Total | | 2240.694 | 2615 | .857 | Grand Mean = 4.21 | |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 6

| RESPONDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS PURCHASE AND CONSUMPTION OF SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|-----|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| Using Self-Medication / OTC medicines as self-medication is safe when you use them correctly. | 654 | 4.08 | 0.927 | 85.009 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Self-Medication / OTC medicines are convenient to obtain and use | 654 | 4.15 | 0.954 | 84.374 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Self-Medication / OTC medicines can be used in pregnancy and breastfeeding but with caution unless stated on the label to avoid. | 654 | 4.09 | 1.000 | 78.997 | 653 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|-------|--------|-----|-------|
| I think I use more OTC medicine, because of availability. | 654 | 4.01 | 1.051 | 73.112 | 653 | 0.000 |
| I should take Self-Medication / OTC medicines, when I have minor illness | 654 | 3.89 | 1.091 | 67.722 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Self-Medication / OTC medicines are safe, but I would seek a pharmacist's advice if I am not sure about my minor illness and which is suitable for it. | 654 | 3.75 | 1.074 | 65.566 | 653 | 0.000 |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 7

| RESPONDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINE | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|-----|------|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------|
| OTC medications are safe for self-use. | 654 | 4.10 | 0.894 | 88.727 | 653 | 0.000 |
| OTC medications are effective in treating minor illnesses. | 654 | 4.13 | 0.908 | 88.061 | 653 | 0.000 |
| The quality of OTC medications is reliable. | 654 | 4.05 | 0.930 | 83.941 | 653 | 0.000 |
| OTC medications provide quick relief. | 654 | 4.13 | 0.938 | 85.365 | 653 | 0.000 |
| OTC medications are convenient to purchase and use. | 654 | 4.06 | 0.976 | 80.224 | 653 | 0.000 |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 8

| FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE OF SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINES | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|-----|------|----------------|---------|-----|-----------------|
| Affordable price of Self-Medication / OTC medicines. | 654 | 4.51 | 0.830 | 108.271 | 653 | 0.000 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|-------|---------|-----|-------|
| Brand reputation. | 654 | 4.49 | 0.818 | 109.072 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Easy availability at nearby pharmacies. | 654 | 4.61 | 0.713 | 129.463 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Advice provided by pharmacists. | 654 | 4.55 | 0.713 | 127.371 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Previous experience with the medicine. | 654 | 4.48 | 0.840 | 105.771 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Recommendations from friends or family | 654 | 4.47 | 0.853 | 103.964 | 653 | 0.000 |

Data Source: Primary

Table – 9

| PROBLEM USING SELF-MEDICATION / OTC MEDICINES | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|----------------|---------|-----|-----------------|
| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| I have experienced side effects after using OTC medicines. | 654 | 4.53 | .809 | 143.182 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Wrong dosage of OTC medicines can be harmful. | 654 | 4.49 | .841 | 136.532 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Continuous use of OTC medicines may lead to health complications. | 654 | 4.56 | .754 | 154.663 | 653 | 0.000 |
| Lack of proper guidance increases misuse of OTC medicines. | 654 | 4.31 | .937 | 117.569 | 653 | 0.000 |
| OTC medicines may delay proper medical diagnosis. | 654 | 4.41 | .926 | 121.782 | 653 | 0.000 |

Data Source: Primary

Interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents indicates that a majority belonged to the older age groups. Respondents aged 51–60 years constituted the largest segment (26.0%), followed closely by those above 60 years (25.1%). Younger respondents aged 21–30 years accounted for 18.7%, while 31–40 years and 41–50 years represented 17.4% and 12.8%, respectively. In terms of gender, male respondents formed the majority with 58.0%, whereas female respondents accounted for 42.0% of the sample. Overall, the study sample was predominantly composed of middle-aged and older adults, with a higher representation of males.

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in respondents' perceptions towards self-medication and OTC medicines ($F = 8.852, p < 0.001$). The Grand Mean score of 4.10 suggests that respondents generally hold a favourable perception towards the use of self-medication and OTC medicines. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, it can be inferred that respondents exhibit a consistently positive attitude toward OTC medicines, recognizing them as a convenient and acceptable option for managing minor health conditions. Overall, the findings indicate a high level of acceptance and positive perception of self-medication practices among the respondents.

The ANOVA results reveal a statistically significant influence of the selected factors on the purchase of self-medication and OTC medicines ($F = 4.243, p = 0.001$). The Grand Mean score of 4.52 indicates that respondents strongly agree that various factors significantly influence their decision to purchase OTC medicines. Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming that the factors considered in the study have a meaningful impact on consumers' purchase behaviour. The findings suggest that respondents are highly influenced by factors such as convenience, accessibility, previous experience, pharmacist recommendations, affordability, and perceived effectiveness when purchasing self-medication and OTC medicines.

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant level of acceptance towards purchasing medicines through self-medication and OTC channels ($F = 3.465, p = 0.001$). Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the findings confirm that respondents exhibit a consistent pattern of acceptance regarding the purchase of OTC medicines. The Grand Mean of 0.94 suggests a very high level of acceptance among respondents, indicating that buying medicines without a prescription for minor ailments has become a widely accepted practice. The results demonstrate that respondents are generally comfortable with and receptive to the use of self-medication and OTC medicines as part of their healthcare decisions.

The ANOVA results reveal that pharmacist advice, advertisement influence, past experience, and purchase behaviour are all statistically significant factors associated with self-medication and OTC medicine usage ($p < 0.001$ for all dimensions). The

high Grand Mean scores ranging from 4.19 to 4.21 indicate a strong level of agreement among respondents regarding the importance of these factors. Among the variables, pharmacist advice (Grand Mean = 4.21) emerged as a highly influential factor, suggesting that consumers place considerable trust in pharmacists when selecting OTC medicines. Similarly, advertisements (Grand Mean = 4.21) significantly influenced consumers' awareness and purchase decisions. Past experience (Grand Mean = 4.19) also played a crucial role, indicating that previous positive outcomes encourage repeated self-medication practices. Furthermore, purchase behaviour (Grand Mean = 4.21) reflected respondents' strong inclination toward purchasing OTC medicines for managing minor ailments. The findings suggest that consumers' self-medication and OTC medicine usage are strongly shaped by pharmacist recommendations, advertising exposure, prior experiences, and established purchasing habits, highlighting the importance of these factors in influencing OTC medicine consumption.

The one-sample t-test results indicate that respondents exhibit a positive attitude towards the purchase and consumption of self-medication and OTC medicines, as all statements recorded high mean scores ranging from 3.75 to 4.15 and were statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Respondents strongly agreed that OTC medicines are convenient to obtain and use (Mean = 4.15), and that they are safe when used correctly (Mean = 4.08). They also acknowledged the cautious use of OTC medicines during pregnancy and breastfeeding (Mean = 4.09). The findings further suggest that the easy availability of OTC medicines encourages their use (Mean = 4.01), and that respondents consider them appropriate for treating minor illnesses (Mean = 3.89). Additionally, respondents indicated a willingness to seek a pharmacist's advice when uncertain about their condition or medication choice (Mean = 3.75). The results demonstrate that respondents hold a favourable attitude toward self-medication and OTC medicines, recognizing their convenience and usefulness while also appreciating the importance of professional guidance for safe and appropriate use.

The results indicate that respondents hold a highly positive perception towards self-medication and OTC medicines, as reflected by the high mean scores ranging from 4.05 to 4.13. All statements were

statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), confirming strong agreement among respondents. The highest levels of agreement were observed for the statements that OTC medications are effective in treating minor illnesses (Mean = 4.13) and provide quick relief (Mean = 4.13). Respondents also perceived OTC medicines as safe for self-use (Mean = 4.10), convenient to purchase and use (Mean = 4.06), and of reliable quality (Mean = 4.05). The findings suggest that consumers have a favourable perception of OTC medicines, viewing them as safe, effective, reliable, and convenient options for managing minor health conditions without the need for immediate medical consultation.

The results reveal that several factors significantly influence consumers' decisions to purchase self-medication and OTC medicines, with all statements showing high mean scores ranging from 4.47 to 4.61 and statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Among the factors, easy availability at nearby pharmacies emerged as the most influential factor (Mean = 4.61), indicating that accessibility strongly encourages OTC medicine purchases. This was followed by advice provided by pharmacists (Mean = 4.55), highlighting the important role pharmacists play in guiding consumers' medication choices. Respondents also considered affordable price (Mean = 4.51), brand reputation (Mean = 4.49), and previous experience with the medicine (Mean = 4.48) as important determinants of purchase decisions. Additionally, recommendations from friends and family (Mean = 4.47) influenced consumers' choices, reflecting the impact of social networks on self-medication behaviour. The findings suggest that accessibility, pharmacist guidance, affordability, brand trust, prior experience, and social recommendations are key factors driving the purchase of self-medication and OTC medicines among consumers.

The respondents acknowledged the existence of certain problems associated with self-medication and OTC medicine use, and all the items were found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The high t-values suggest strong agreement among respondents regarding these concerns. The findings imply that although self-medication and OTC medicines are widely accepted and frequently used, respondents are aware of potential issues such as inappropriate dosage, adverse side effects, drug interactions, delayed medical consultation, and misuse of medicines. This highlights the importance of consumer awareness,

pharmacist guidance, and responsible medication practices to minimize the risks associated with self-medication and ensure the safe use of OTC medicines.

VI. FINDINGS

The study found that respondents held a highly favourable perception towards self-medication and OTC medicines, with a grand mean score of 4.10. Most respondents viewed OTC medicines as safe, convenient, and acceptable for managing minor health conditions. The analysis revealed that various factors significantly influenced the purchase of OTC medicines, with a grand mean score of 4.52. Consumers' purchase decisions were strongly affected by convenience, accessibility, affordability, pharmacist recommendations, previous experience, and perceived effectiveness.

The findings indicated a high level of acceptance towards purchasing medicines through self-medication and OTC channels, suggesting that obtaining medicines without a prescription for minor ailments has become a common and widely accepted practice among consumers. Pharmacist advice emerged as one of the most influential factors affecting OTC medicine usage. Respondents demonstrated a high level of trust in pharmacists when selecting medicines for self-treatment.

Advertisements significantly influenced consumers' awareness and purchase decisions, indicating the important role of promotional activities in shaping OTC medicine consumption behaviour. Past experience with medicines was found to be a major determinant of self-medication behaviour, as positive prior outcomes encouraged repeated use of the same medicines without medical consultation. Respondents exhibited a positive attitude towards the purchase and consumption of OTC medicines, particularly regarding their convenience, safety when used correctly, and suitability for treating minor illnesses.

The study found that respondents were generally willing to seek pharmacists' advice when uncertain about their illness or medication choice, highlighting the perceived importance of professional guidance. Consumers demonstrated a strong positive perception regarding the effectiveness, safety, reliability, and quick relief provided by OTC medicines, making them a preferred option for managing common health problems. Among the purchase determinants, easy

availability at nearby pharmacies was identified as the most influential factor, followed by pharmacist advice, affordable pricing, brand reputation, previous experience, and recommendations from friends and family.

The findings confirmed that social influences, including recommendations from family members and friends, played a significant role in shaping consumers' OTC medicine purchasing behaviour. Although respondents expressed favourable attitudes toward self-medication, they also acknowledged the existence of potential problems associated with OTC medicine use, including inappropriate dosage, adverse side effects, drug interactions, delayed medical consultation, and misuse of medicines. The study revealed that consumers were generally aware of the risks associated with improper self-medication, indicating a reasonable level of awareness regarding the need for responsible medicine use.

Overall, the findings suggest that self-medication and OTC medicine usage are driven by a combination of accessibility, convenience, affordability, pharmacist guidance, prior experience, and positive consumer perceptions, while awareness of potential risks underscores the importance of promoting safe and rational medication practices.

VII. SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

Self-Medication/OTC-Medication will not be a good remedy for all health issues, in case of common cold, head-ache, body pain, etc. self-medication/OTC-medication can only be used as a primary first aid, and always get checked with a physician. Self-Medication or OTC-Medication is not a solution. Though medical cost might have been raising, it is because advancement in medical technology provides facility to find out the real cause of the health of a patient, so that a better treatment can be afforded to the sick-person. If anyone needs medicine, it is advisable to get advice from the physician, on their advice OTC-Medication can be used, so that the evil effects can be curtailed.

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