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Drug Utilization Without Consulting A Doctor in Edirne: A Population Study

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Aim: We aimed to determine the drug utilization of patients without consulting a doctor in Edirne. **Methods:** Out of 6133 patients over 18 years of age admitted to 19 Family Health Centers located in the city center, 36.8% (n=1781) agreed to participate. Patients with a communication problem have been excluded. A questionnaire prepared by the researchers has been filled out face-to-face.

Results: According to patients' responses, 62.5% (n=1113) of patients did not use the drug without consulting a doctor, while 37.5% of them did (n=668). There was no significant difference between genders. Students, high-income group and master/doctoral graduates had the highest proportion of using medications. For the reason of using the drugs without consulting (n=668), 53.3% (n=356) stated that "used a previously successful drug", 25.6% (n=171) "emergency use" and 10.8% (n=72) "drug is cheaper than consultation". Of these drugs, 88.5% (n=591) were pain killers, 51.5% (n=344) cold medicines and 12.7% (n=85) were vitamins.

Conclusion: An important part of patients had irrational drug use behaviors in our study. The use of drugs without the advice of doctor and over-the-counter drugs are significant problems resulting in irrational drug use along with misuse of prescribed drugs with inappropriate duration, frequency and doses. Doctors' instructions to patients about their condition and the drugs they prescribe will increase patient compliance and treatment efficacy. Pharmacists may also help to decrease the misuse of the drugs with informing the patients on drug usage, dosage and period. People should be informed about the rational drug use by means of communication tools such as newspapers, magazines, television, internet, brochures. Additionally, it will be an important approach to include drug use education into school curriculum as a part of health education in early years.