PREVALENCE OF SELF-MEDICATION IN A MUNICIPALITY IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL AND ASSOCIATED FACTORS

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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is defined by the National Health Surveillance Agency as the irresponsible practice of using drugs without a medical/odontological prescription (Brazil, 2001). There are several causes of self-medication, among them: cultural aspect, easy access to medicines, difficult access to health services, variety of pharmaceutical products and lack of supervision (Teni, et al. 2017, BMC Res Notes). Self-medication can cause health risks such as intoxications, allergies, drug interactions, pharmacological dependence, bacterial resistance and even death (Balen et al. 2017, J Bras Psiquiatr; Matos et al. 2018, Cad Saúde Colet). The objective of the study was to determine the prevalence of self-medication and its associated factors in the adult population of the city of Navegantes-SC, Brazil.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Cross-sectional, descriptive and analytical population-based study conducted in Navegantes, SC. The population was composed of adults aged 20 to 59 years. We used a questionnaire containing 26 questions divided into five blocks: sociodemographic profile, social habits, use of health services, self-assessment of health and medications. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of UNIVALI under opinion 2.577.497. To investigate the variables associated with self-medication, Poisson regression with $p<0.05$ was used.

RESULTS

A total of 1120 individuals participated in the survey. The prevalence of self-medication was 35.1%. After adjusting the prevalence ratios, the associated factors were: individuals aged between 30-39 years ($p=0.027$) and 40 to 49 years ($p=0.028$), making consultations in the last three months ($p=0.008$), presence of chronic disease ($p=0.020$) and presenting a good self-evaluation of their health ($p=0.048$). The class of anti-inflammatory drugs (musculoskeletal system) was the most used (28.9%), followed by antihypertensive drugs (cardiovascular system) (15.2%) and genito-urinary system and sex hormones (12.7%).

CONCLUSIONS

The research showed that the prevalence of self-medication in Navegantes was high. Strategies are recommended to clarify to the population the risks caused by this practice and to raise awareness about the indiscriminate use of medications.

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