

Socio-Demographic and Clinical Characteristics and Use of Herbal Medicine among Patients Seeking Consultation for Knee Osteoarthritis at Secondary Healthcare Facilities in Oman

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Abstract : Background: Knee osteoarthritis (knee OA) represents a major public health burden worldwide, particularly among older adults. However, little has been documented from Arabian Gulf countries, which have left an information gap. Objective: This study describes the socio-demographic, clinical risk factors, and use of herbal medicine among men and women seeking consultation for knee OA at two secondary healthcare facilities in Muscat, Oman. Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 213 Omani adults with knee OA attending a referral polyclinic in Muscat, Oman, over 12 months from January to December. Socio-demographic data were collected from the participants who are seeking consultation for knee OA. Results: Among the 213 study participants, 171 were females and 42 males. The females were comparatively older than the males, had lower education and lower-income, and more overweight. The majority of the participants were normal weight or underweight. About one-third of participants reported OA in other joints as well. Most participants recalled that they had knee OA for less than a year. About 12% reported a history of trauma. The majority (63%) concurrently had other chronic illnesses, and 33% reported having at least one complication. About 22% were using herbal medicines. About 77% are using herbal local applications in form of powder and creams. Conclusion: This study, to our knowledge, is the first to explore socio-demographic characteristics, clinical risk factors and use of herbal medicine among sufferers of knee OA in Oman. Knee OA tended to occur among our participants at younger ages than reported elsewhere, while obesity appeared orthogonal to the severity of knee OA. Women were more affected than men. About one quarter of Omani patients are using herbal medicine. More studies are needed to understand the causal factors and development of knee OA in Oman. Targeted health education and rehabilitation programs are needed, particularly among Omani women, to improve their physical quality of life.

Keywords : knee joint, osteoarthritis, herbal medicine, Oman

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