

Inappropriate Antibiotic Use: An Online Survey in Thailand

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Abstract : Irrational use of medicines is a major problem in public health. Half of all patients take medicines incorrectly. An inappropriate use of antibiotics is one of the common types of irrational medicine use; for example, patients use antibiotic for treatment of common cold or diarrhea. Objectives: This cross-sectional study aimed to investigate the behaviors on antibiotic use, using amoxicillin and norfloxacin as examples, as well as sources of received health information. Methods: An online self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from participants in Thailand between September and December 2015. Participants were asked about their behaviors on antibiotic use. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results: Of all 405 participants, most were female (65.3 %), aged 18-30 years (49.4 %), undergraduate or lower (69.7%), and civil servant or state enterprises (31.7 %). We found inappropriate behaviors in use of amoxicillin or norfloxacin: 1) there were 201/400 participants (50.3%) taking amoxicillin right away in case of having a common cold, such as having sore throat, running nose, and cough; 2) there were 170/405 participants (42.0%) using amoxicillin for relieving inflammatory symptoms, e.g. muscle inflammation or osteoarthritis; 3) there were 71/398 participants (17.8%) using amoxicillin as a muscle relaxant; 4) there were 135/398 participants (33.9%) using norfloxacin for treating diarrhea. Sources of health information received by the participants were from the internet (78.5%), the radio and/or television (42.2%), advertising publishing (33.3 %), and word of mouth (30.1%). Conclusion: This study showed improper behaviors in antibiotic use especially amoxicillin and norfloxacin. Health care providers including pharmacists should raise the public awareness on dangers of inappropriate antibiotic use and promote the rational use of antibiotics.

Keywords : antibiotic use, amoxicillin, norfloxacin, rational drug use

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