



Overview of the Level of Knowledge and Attitude of the Community about the Practice of Antihistamine Drug Self-Medication in Handling Allergies in Biawu Village, South Kota District

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ABSTRACT

Self-medication of antihistamines for the treatment of allergies is a common practice in the community. However, a lack of understanding of dosage, indications, and side effects can pose health risks. This study aims to find out how the level of knowledge and public attitudes about the practice of self-medication of antihistamines in handling allergies in Biawu village, South Kota District. This research method uses a cross-sectional design with a quantitative descriptive approach. The sample totaled 97 respondents who were selected by purposive sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was carried out descriptively. The population of this study is all people in Biawu village, south Kota district. The results showed that the majority of respondents as many as 58.8% of respondents had a high level of knowledge, 15.5% moderate, and 25.8% low about antihistamine self-medication. Most respondents (96.9%) had a moderate attitude, and only 3.1% had a high attitude. In terms of practice, 62.9% of respondents had high self-medication practices, 27.8% moderate, and 9.3% low. As many as 83.5% of respondents often buy drugs without a medical prescription, and the main source of information is personal/family experience (66%). The conclusion of the study is that although the majority of the public has knowledge of the dangers high practice of antihistamine self-medication. However, the attitude and practice of self-medication is still in the high category. The need for sustainable health education and the active role of health workers in guiding the community to carry out rational and safe self-medication.

INTRODUCTION

People who live in tropical countries have many health problems experienced, one of which is attacking the outermost body defense system, which is skin health problems. Skin diseases are disorders caused by viruses, parasites, germs, fungi, and infections that can affect anyone of any age.

Allergies are a global health problem with increasing prevalence, including in Indonesia Based on data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency of Gorontalo City about the 10 most diseases, namely in 2017, allergic diseases (contact dermatitis) ranked 4th with a total of 7,128 cases. Meanwhile, in 2018 contact dermatitis ranked 4th with a total of 6,159 cases.

Allergy symptoms such as itching, sneezing, and rhinitis are often treated independently by people using antihistamine drugs that are easily obtained without a doctor's prescription. This practice of self-medication is known as self-medication.

Self-medication or self-medication (self-medication) is a treatment carried out by a person in an independent way starting from recognizing the disease or symptoms experienced to the selection in the use of drugs. Self-medication is the most common way for people to deal with complaints or symptoms of a disease, before people seek help from health care centers, or by going to pharmacies or drug stores to buy simple medicines on their own without a doctor's order.

Self-medication has advantages in cost and time efficiency, but it also carries risks if done without adequate knowledge of the dosage, indications, contraindications, and side effects of the drug. Community knowledge and attitudes are the main determining factors in the success and safety of self-medicine. Based on this background, this study was conducted to describe the level of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the people of Biawu Village towards self-medication of antihistamine drugs.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research has been carried out in Biawu village, South Kota District, Gorontalo City May-June 2025. This study uses a cross-sectional design with a quantitative descriptive approach. The population is all residents of Biawu Village totaling 3,174 people. A sample of 97 respondents was selected using purposive sampling techniques that met the inclusion criteria: ≥ 18 years old, had purchased and taken antihistamines, and were willing to be respondents. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections: demographic data, knowledge (5 items), attitudes (5 Likert scale items), and practice (5 items). The questionnaire has been tested for validity and reliability. Data were analyzed statistically descriptively using frequency and percentages to describe respondents' characteristics as well as levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 Characteristics of Respondents

Categories	N	%
Respondent Age		
20-35	58	59.8
36-50	24	24.7
51-65	15	15.5
Gender		
Women	66	68.0
Male	31	32.0
Jobs		
Students	11	11.3
PNS	5	5.2
Self-employed	21	21.6
IRT	41	42.3
Others	19	19.6
Final Education		
SD		
Junior High School	11	11.3
High School	12	12.4
Lectures	47	48.5
	27	27.8
Total	97	100

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on table 1, it shows that the most respondents in this study are 20-35 years old, namely 58 respondents (59.8%) out of a total of 97 respondents. The gender that filled out the questionnaire the most was women with 66 respondents (68.0%), while men only had 31 respondents (32.0%). The work of respondents dominated IRT, which was as many as 41 respondents (42.3%). This can be caused because when the researcher went down to conduct research at the residents' homes, the respondents who got the most were women and the average respondents were IRTs while men were not at home, besides that the last education of most respondents was high school, which was as many as 47 respondents (48.5%).

Univariate Analysis

Table 2. Overview of the level of knowledge of antihistamine self-medication to treat allergies

No.	Knowledge Level of Dysmenorrhea	N	%
1.	ght	57	58.8
2.	dium	15	15.5
Sec. 3.	w	25	25.8
Total		97	100

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table on the overview of the level of knowledge of antihistamine self-medication in overcoming allergies, it shows that the people in Biawu village have a high level of knowledge, namely 57 respondents with a percentage of 58.8%, and respondents who have sufficient knowledge are 15 respondents (15.5%), while respondents who have low knowledge about antihistamine self-medication in overcoming allergies are 25 respondents (25.8%).

Table 3. Overview of attitudes towards antihistamine self-medication

No.	atment of dysmenorrhea	N	%
1.	ght	3	3.1
2.	dium	94	96.9
Sec. 3.	w	0	0
Total		97	100

Source : Primary Data, 2025

Based on the table on the description of self-medication attitudes towards the use of Antihistamines, it shows that people in Biawu village have a moderate self-medication attitude, namely with a total of 94 respondents (96.9%) while the self-medication attitude is high as 3 respondents (3.1%), but there are no respondents in Biawu village who have a low self-medication attitude towards the use of antihistamines.

Table 4. Overview of Antihistamine Swamedy Practice

No.	atment of dysmenorrhea	N	%
1.	ght	61	62.9
2.	dium	27	27.8
Sec. 3.	w	9	9.3
Total		97	100

Based on the table regarding the description of self-medication practices on the use of Antihistamines, it shows that the community in Biawu Village has a high practice of antihistamine self-medication, namely as many as 61 respondents (62.9%), moderate self-medication attitudes as many as 27 respondents (27.8%), while the community in Biawu Village who has a low self-medication practice of antihistamines is 9 respondents (9.3%).

DISCUSSION

Overview of the level of knowledge of antihistamine self-medication to treat allergies

Public knowledge of antihistamine drugs and indications for their use is very important in avoiding mistakes in self-medication. A person's knowledge will influence their attitudes and actions in the use of drugs. Good knowledge of the dosage, indications and side effects of antihistamines allows people to use drugs more wisely.

In this study, 57 respondents (58.8%) in Biawu village had a high level of knowledge about antihistamines that can be used to treat allergy symptoms, side effects of antihistamines, and the main indications of antihistamine use. Respondents with sufficient knowledge were 15 respondents (15.5%) and low knowledge were 25 respondents (25.8%).

A person's level of knowledge is influenced by several factors, such as age, education, occupation, beliefs, socio-culture, and environment. The age of the respondents in this study ranged from 20-35 years old, namely 58 respondents, while those aged 36-50 years were 24 respondents, and 51-65 years old were 15 respondents. The age factor can affect a person's mindset and ability to question the information received. Age is a factor that affects knowledge because the older you get, the more mature you will be in working and thinking.

The results of this study show that the last education of the most respondents was high school as many as 47 out of 97 respondents. Individuals with higher levels of education can receive information more easily so that they can expand their knowledge and tend to be more careful, logical, and rational in carrying out an

action (Arrang, 2024). Education is a learning process or activity to improve and develop knowledge and abilities and will determine whether or not it is easy to receive or absorb the knowledge obtained. The higher the education, the easier it will be to receive information, but if the level of education is low, the acceptance of information will be hampered.

The most respondents' work in this study was IRT (41 respondents). The work factor can also provide people with experience and knowledge directly or indirectly through the process of exchanging information in the work environment. Knowledge and experience can be gained from the workplace environment that is gained directly or indirectly. For example, individuals who work in the health sector will have much better knowledge than individuals who work outside the health sector.

According to Notoatmodjo, knowledge is the most significant domain to determine responses in the form of attitudes that can have an impact on behavior. When a person gets the right information about self-medication, it can expand knowledge so that people can determine the right attitude and action when carrying out self-medication. A person's level of knowledge will affect their thinking style and capacity to understand aspects that contribute to illness or complaint, as well as their ability to use that knowledge to maintain their health.

Overview of Attitudes Towards Antihistamine Self-Medication

Attitude is defined as a person's tendency to act, whether they support or dissupport an object. Attitude itself is not an action, but attitude is a predisposing factor for a behavior. Attitude is a predisposing factor for a behavior. So that if someone has a positive attitude towards an object, the practice that will be carried out will also have positive results.

In this study, it was shown that the people in Biawu village had a moderate self-medication attitude, namely with a total of 94 respondents (96.9%) while the self-medication attitude was high as 3 respondents (3.1%), but there were no respondents in Biawu village who had a low self-medication attitude towards the use of antihistamines.

The results of the study on the questionnaire on attitudes towards antihistamine self-medication showed that respondents who agreed that antihistamines could relieve symptoms, namely as many as 77 respondents (79.4%) out of a total of 97 respondents and respondents who did not agree with it only 6 respondents (6.2%). Meanwhile, 49 respondents (50.5%) disagreed with the use of antihistamines without a doctor's prescription and 40 respondents (41.2%) agreed, and there were even 3 respondents who strongly agreed that antihistamines were used without a doctor's prescription. In addition, although 65 respondents (67.0%) are still worried about the side effects of antihistamines, there are still 23 respondents (23.7%) who do not agree that antihistamines are only used with a doctor's prescription and there are 50 respondents (41.2%) who agree that they prefer to buy antihistamines rather than consult a doctor.

Some of the factors that affect people's attitudes towards antihistamines are the level of education and medical knowledge, previous drug use experience, media information or recommendations from peers. In this study, it was shown that as many as 64 respondents obtained drug information based on personal/family experience, 17 respondents received information from other people's suggestions and 14 respondents received information from health workers. Many people believe that antihistamine medications are safe and can be used without a doctor's prescription, because they consider allergy symptoms to be a mild and easily manageable condition. This attitude is risky, especially if used inappropriately and in the wrong dose. Antihistamines have several side effects such as sedation (drowsiness), dry mouth, digestive system disorders, dizziness, and cognitive impairment especially in long-term use.

Attitude is the readiness to respond positively or negatively to an object or situation consistently. The attitude that exists in humans can encourage or cause a certain action, but behind this will this process does not occur by itself, but there are several stages, one of which is the process of learning from experience. Attitude is a crucial issue in education. No matter how high the knowledge and skills produced from the learning process, it will be meaningless when the person does not have a tendency to behave well. Attitudes are formed on the basis of experience in relation to objects outside of themselves. A person's attitude will grow stronger or vice versa depending on previous experiences. Basically, that attitude is a driving factor for a person to carry out activities.

Overview of Attitudes Towards Antihistamine Self-Medication

The practice of self-medication in Biawu Village towards the use of Antihistamines has a high self-medication practice with a total of 61 respondents while the self-medication attitude is moderate to 27 respondents and there are still people in Biawu Village who have low self-medication practices against antihistamines, namely 9 respondents (9.3%).

The results of the study and data processing regarding the practice of self-medication of antihistamines showed that 32 respondents (33.0%) always read the instructions and dosage for the use of the purchased antihistamines, but there were still 8 respondents (8.2%) who never read the instructions for the use of the purchased drug. Although there are still many respondents who buy antihistamines without consulting a

doctor, 53 respondents (54.6%) always follow pharmacist's advice regarding the use of antihistamines and 57 respondents (58.8%) always stop using antihistamines if they feel side effects from the drug.

Based on research conducted by (Rosyid, 2023), it is shown that attitude and knowledge have a significant relationship with self-medication behavior with the value obtained, namely the relationship between attitude and knowledge with a value of r (0.308) from the results of the Spearman correlation statistical test, showing that the level of knowledge has a significant relationship with self-medication behavior with a p -value of 0.000, this is in accordance with research conducted by Handayani (2013) where in the study the relationship between attitude and knowledge was very weak with a value of $r = 0.195$. Knowledge is a very important domain for the formation of a person's actions. Behavior based on knowledge will be more lasting than one that is not based on knowledge.

The level of knowledge, attitude and practice are the three domains of the concept of behavior. A person with a good level of knowledge is not necessarily good in the domain of attitude and practice and likewise a person who is good in attitude is not necessarily good in the level of knowledge and practice. There are several factors that cause domain differences in each individual, namely supporting factors, predisposing factors, and driving factors.

Antihistamines are one of the most familiar drugs among the public that are used to treat various allergic conditions. This drug can be purchased and handed over by a pharmacist without a doctor's prescription with a maximum purchase of 10 tablets. However, the need for good understanding and the participation of pharmacists as service providers is needed to achieve good self-medication behavior. The government has issued Government Regulation No. 51 of 2009 concerning Pharmaceutical Work which is part of the government's efforts to prevent the public from using the wrong drugs, or misusing drugs, or using drugs that are not in accordance with doctor's prescriptions. In carrying out pharmaceutical service practices, pharmacists have obligations, namely ensuring the service of providing drugs to patients with full responsibility in accordance with applicable regulations, providing counseling and residential, providing correct information about how to use drugs, side effects, and drug contraindications, conducting prescription screening and maintaining service quality.

Misuse or improper use of drugs from self-medication can have a detrimental impact on health, especially if it involves certain medications, one of which is antihistamines. Self-medication has the potential to cause delays in the diagnosis and treatment of serious diseases. In addition, self-medication can increase the risk of polypharmacy and increase the risk of drug poisoning due to overdose or dangerous drug interactions.

CONCLUSION

The overview of the level of public knowledge about the use of antihistamine drugs in self-medication shows that the community in Biawu village has a high level of knowledge, namely 57 respondents with a percentage of 58.8%, and respondents who have sufficient knowledge are 15 respondents (15.5%), while respondents who have low knowledge about antihistamine self-medication in overcoming allergies are 25 respondents (25.8%).

The overview of the community's attitude towards the use of antihistamines in self-medication shows that the people in Biawu village have a moderate self-medication attitude, namely with a total of 94 respondents (96.9%) while the self-medication attitude is high as 3 respondents (3.1%), but there are no respondents in Biawu village who have a low self-medication attitude towards the use of antihistamines.

The overview of community practices towards the use of antihistamines in self-medication shows that the community in Biawu Village has a high practice of antihistamine self-medication, namely as many as 61 respondents (62.9%), moderate self-medication attitude as many as 27 respondents (27.8%), while the community in Biawu Village who has a low self-medication practice of antihistamines is 9 respondents (9.3%).

ADVICE

Consider expanding the sample to other regions to improve the generalization of the results. Add demographic variation (e.g., older age or teens) to understand differences in knowledge and attitudes between age groups.

Questionnaires can be enriched with open-ended questions to explore the reasons behind self-medication practices, such as economic factors or access to health services.

The results of the research can be the basis for public education programs on safe antihistamine self-medication, in collaboration with local health centers or pharmacies.

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