



MEDICAL THERAPIES AND PHARMACOLOGY

## PREVALENCE OF USE OF NON-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION IN DERMATOLOGY: A CROSS-SECTIONAL PROSPECTIVE STUDY IN A TERTIARY CARE CENTER

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**Introduction:** Self-medication with over the counter medication is very prevalent among general population. This is especially so in dermatology, where the use of topical medications are considered to be “safe”. This can lead to many adverse effects and may be even lead to exacerbation/precipitation of disease.

**Objective:** To study the profile of use of non-prescription medications among dermatology patients.

**Materials and methods:** Patients (191) presenting to Dermatology department of a tertiary care hospital with history of non-prescription medication use were taken for the study after written informed consent. Ethical committee clearance was obtained prior to the study. A detailed history of medication use was taken and side effects (if any) from use were noted as per a standard format. Data was entered in SPSS and statistically analyzed using Chi-square test

**Results:** There is 45.5% discordance in the diagnosis and medication used. Discordance was significantly more in when steroid preparations were used (Chi-square test-  $p < 0.004 < 0.01$ ).

103 (53.64%) patients used non-prescription drugs containing steroids. The most common side effect was steroid induced skin changes 28(14.6%).

Methotrexate induced liver damage and HPA axis suppression secondary to systemic steroids were seen in one patient each.

**Conclusions:** Non-prescription usage of previously used medication is widely prevalent especially with topicals, in urban areas and for fungal infections.

Steroids are present in maximum non-prescription medications with significantly more incidence of side effects and also discordance in treatment and diagnosis. Therefore, use of OTC medications should be discouraged.

