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ATTITUDINAL LAXITY OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AS A CAUSATIVE FACTOR FOR SELF-MEDICATION AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract

Self-medication is increasingly becoming a public health concern with dire consequences for the global population. As self-medication rises so does substance abuse and addiction which has far-reaching consequences for the health of the population. Some of the potential risks of self-medication practices include incorrect self-diagnosis, missed diagnosis, delays in seeking medical advice when needed, infrequent but severe adverse reactions, dangerous drug interactions, incorrect manner of administration, incorrect dosage, incorrect choice of therapy, masking of severe disease, pathogen resistance, increased morbidity and increased risk of death. This study examined the relationship between the poor attitudinal disposition of healthcare professionals and the increase in self-medication among Covenant University undergraduates. A self-administered questionnaire was utilized to elicit information about the attitude of the University health center professionals from respondents in a cross-sectional survey. Findings among others revealed that students are often discouraged from visiting the health center whenever they are ill primarily due to the hostile way, they are attended to by the health care professionals at the health center. As a result, they prefer to self-medicate which to them is cheaper and more accessible. Some of the behavioral dispositions of the healthcare professionals they described include a lack of empathy, hostility, and a judgmental attitude. This attitudinal lax has in turn led to an upsurge in self-medication and consequently drug abuse among the student population leading to poor patient outcomes. This study suggests attitudinal change among Nigerian healthcare professionals to avert unnecessary public health pitfalls which may be a threat to achieving better health outcomes among the general population.

Keywords: Self-medication, public health, healthcare professionals, undergraduates