

Consequences of Outbreak of Coronavirus in the Provision of Wuhan: China

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Description

Since the very first outbreak of Coronavirus in the provision of Wuhan, China, the COVID-19 pandemic has completely changed people's way of living in most countries. All around the world, the rampant spread of coronavirus has created chaos and havoc, not to mention the continuous struggle of governments and health care workers to treat infected people and stop the spreading of infection. Countries around the world have imposed lockdown according to the need of controlling the infection. However, many small clinics and treatment facilities have closed during COVID-19, and the fear of contracting the virus aided the deprivation of time-sensitive medical advice or assistance when needed by the common people. It is an encouraging factor for self-medication. World Health Organization narrates that the usage of drugs for the treatment of self-diagnosed diseases and in some cases, self-medication prescribed by a doctor for treating chronic diseases, recurrent diseases, or symptoms are known as self-medication. Usage of old drugs, drugs prescribed for other symptoms or diseases, usage of drugs without prescription from a doctor, medication sharing between friends and family, and usage of expired drugs are all included in this type of self-medication.

Common Contributing Factors That Encourage Self-Medication

Lockdown measures, limited access to hospitals and health centers due to COVID-19, and fear of acquiring infection from healthcare center employees or patients are amongst the most common contributing factors that encourage self-medication. Self-medication practices ought to be monitored properly, especially among the low and middle-income countries which are currently facing an economic crisis due to COVID-19 and often has low standards of education along with insufficient healthcare facilities. Incongruous self-medication could pose many threats to its users such as side effects of improper medication, misdiagnosis, delay in seeking professional advice, improper selection of therapy, taking medications with unforeseen complications, taking wrong doses of medication, dependence risk, and so on. According to various studies, self-medication has a prevalence rate of 32.5–81.5%, making it a common exercise worldwide. The situation has also been provoked by the rise of misinformation about self-medication in

the social media sphere which leads to panic and confusion and further increases the rate of self-medication including home remedies that do not possess established safety or efficacy. Several drugs have been presented as prospective candidates for the COVID-19 pandemic as it has progressed, with little to no help provided for the patients by the majority. Some are even responsible for causing harm. Findings from small investigations or in vitro studies presented a drug named hydroxychloroquine which garnered a lot of attention at first but later, RCT (Randomized Controlled Trial) investigations among hospitalized patients (Recovery study and Solidarity Trials) found no evidence to support the therapeutic effects of the drug, compared to standard treatment. Azithromycin is another drug that is on this list. Additional drugs such as vitamin supplements are still undergoing well-designed trials to evaluate their efficacy against COVID-19.

Prevalence and Characteristics of Self-Medication during the Pandemic

Despite these results, self-medication is preferred by many people due to a lack of access to healthcare, misinformation, and mostly the fear of getting infected by COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), unintended effects could include adverse events, needless expenses, and reluctance in seeking out professional help, drug interactions, and symptom masking. The methods used to quantify self-medication, demographic variables, and across different nations and circumstances all influence the prevalence of self-medication. Previous research has looked into the prevalence and characteristics of self-medication during this pandemic, and the usage of a variety of pharmaceuticals, herbal remedies, and supplements for the treatment and prevention of the COVID-19 virus. But, we were unable to find many review papers to summarize their findings as of writing this paper. Hence, an updated and robust review was warranted to determine the scenario of self-medication during the COVID-19 period. The primary objective of our systematic review was to observe the current scenario of self-medication regarding the management or prevention of COVID-19. The secondary objective was to assess the common illnesses for this practice, reasons for self-medication, the source of this medication obtainment, the type of drug taken, and any adverse events that occurred as a result of it.