USERS' PERCEPTION AND PRACTICES ON OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATION IN POKHARA

(A Study of Selected Pharmacies in Pokhara, Kaski)

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Anthropology for the Partial Fulfillment of Master Degree In Anthropology

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

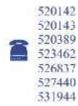
This is to certify that **Mr. Tul Bahadur Gurung** has worked for the full period time prescribed by the department of Anthropology for the completion of this dissertation under my supervision. It is recommended that his M.A. thesis entitled **Users' Perception and Practices on Over-the-counter medication in Pokhara: A Study of Selected Pharmacies in Pokhara, Kaksi** which symbolizes the results of his investigations, submitted for evaluation.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

The evaluation committee has evaluated and accepted this dissertation entitled Users' Perception and Practices on Over-the-counter Medication in Pokhara: A Study of Selected Pharmacies in Pokhara, Kaksi submitted by Mr. Tul Bahadur Gurung for the partial fulfillment of the requirement for masters of Arts in Anthropology.

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It is my pleasure to submit this thesis entitled "Users' Perception and Practices on Over-the-counter medication in Pokhara: A study of selected pharmacies in Pokhara, Kaski", for the partial fulfillment of requirements for Masters Degree in Anthropology, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara.

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ABSTRACT

Drugs which are sold directly to the consumer without a prescription from a health care profession are called Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines. The sale of over-the-counter medicines from the pharmacies can help individuals to self manage symptoms. However, some OTC medicines may be abused with addiction and may harm. People after having some health problems seek the health care settings on the type of practice they usually do. Some of them visit hospital, consult physicians and take the prescribed medicines. Some go through the home care techniques. Some attend to the traditional healers. The rate of incidence of OTC medicines' use is increasing globally day by day. Lives of the people are becoming busier these days and have little time or no to care their health. And at the same time, the treatments are becoming expensive these days. Realizing such situations, this research was carried out to examine the knowledge and perception of OTC users and to analyze the pattern of use of OTC medicines in relation to influencing factors in pokhara. Data was collected from 108 informants from three selected medical halls. Descriptive type of research was done to describe the characteristics of informants. Non probability sampling was chosen to collect the data. The data to be collected were purposive. Semi-structured interview schedule was developed in accordance to fulfillment of the research objective. Then, the data were collected through interviewing directly with the informants at the selected pharmacies. The data collected was mostly quantitative in nature. Interview was the technique employed to collect the required data. Statistical methods were used for the analysis of the quantitative data.

In this study, 87% of the informants had developed positive attitudes towards the pharmacists and found a good source of information about minor health problems, 77.8% of the informants' preferred visiting pharmacy rather than visiting doctor. Almost all 93.5% were aware that the medicine if changed in

color, odor and change in the shape i.e. breakage should be discarded.81.5% reported that the source of knowledge about OTC medicine was pharmacy.78.7% of the informants reported that the OTC drugs are primarily used for minor illness and injuries. (77.8%) found their health problems were treated successfully by OTC medicines.OTC medicines were commonly used for fever, cold, sore throat, decongestant and cough and aches/pain/headaches. 64.8% of the research reported that they visit the nearby pharmacy/ medical after fallen sick. 76.9% initiated self OTC medications themselves.70.4% purchase OTC medicines telling the symptoms to the pharmacist. 70.4% of the informants always check the expiry date of the OTC medicine. 72.2% of the informants reported that they asked the detailed information about the medicine regarding the dose, the frequency for taking medicine, the time to take medicine, It was concluded that more informants preferred visiting pharmacy rather than visiting doctors and hospitals though there is availability of advanced types of services in the hospital. This happened so due to the unavailability of the doctors on time, the crowd, they should be on queue for each and every procedure and found lengthy process. The popularity of OTC medication use among patients may increase the abuse potential of OTC material.OTC medication abuse can be prevented by developing appropriate intervention strategies.

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ABBREVIATION

EM: Explanatory model

MOH Minister of Health

OPD: Outpatient door

OTC: Over-the-counter

WHO: World Health Organization