

**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**

**Submitted by
Tul Bahadur Gurung
T.U. Regd. No. 5-1-294-54-98
Symbol No. 480509
Roll No-232/065**

**Tribhuvan University
Prithvi Narayan Campus
Pokhara**

2019



पत्र संख्या
चलानी नं.

त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

पृथ्वीनारायण क्याम्पस

PRITHVI NARAYAN CAMPUS

(.....)

भीमकाली पाटन, पोखरा, नेपाल
Bhimkali Patan, Pokhara, Nepal

520142
520143
520389
523462
526837
527440
531944

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.

.....

(Janardan Thapa)

Thesis Supervisor

Department of Anthropology

Prithvi Narayan Campus

Pokhara

Date:



पत्र संख्या
चलानी नं.

त्रिभुवन विश्वविद्यालय
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

पृथ्वीनारायण क्याम्पस
PRITHVI NARAYAN CAMPUS

(.....)

भीमकाली पाटन, पोखरा, नेपाल
Bhimkali Patan, Pokhara, Nepal

520142
520143
520389
523462
526837
527440
531944

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.

Members of Dissertation Evaluation Committee

Janardan Thapa

Research Supervisor

Department of Anthropology

Kishor Adhikari

External Expert

Janardan Thapa

Head, Department of Anthropology

T.U., PNC, Pokhara

Date:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.

Accomplishing the task of preparing a dissertation is never an easier one since it requires hard labor, concentration, determination, dedication, time contribution and patience on the part of the researcher and cordial cooperation on the part of all concerned parties. I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have supported and enabled me to accomplish this difficult job. Had there been no such support from the various people and parties? I am sure, I would have never succeeded in completing this job just as per the plan that I had structured. The first thanks goes to my Thesis guide Janardhan Thapa, for all the supports and encouragement he gave me during the research period. Really speaking. It would not have come to this stage if I had not got his such motivation, encouragement and continuous support. I would like to thanks the staffs of the lecturers of the college, due to which I had strong backboned to stand straight on this research base ground, staffs of Regional Library for their efforts in sorting out materials essential for the research. Also, special cordial thanks go to my wife Man Maya Gurung, for handling all the business and household works throughout the whole thesis period and made it happen.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all my informants, proprietors of the medical halls, friends, family members, who largely supported me in collecting the data those, are necessary for the thesis. I would like to personally thank my colleagues Min Raj Gurung, Mr. Pratap Poudel, Krishna Khadka, Sapana Dhakal, Roshan Gurung who helped me in the form of inspiration and back support.

Last, but not the least, I would like to thank all my classmates who inspired me and helped me to carry out this research and bring out the thesis in this form. It would be really injustice if I do not become oblique to the computer typist who helped me a lot in assembling the facts that I have collected.

Tul Bahadur Gurung

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 hall after fallen sick. 76.9% initiated self OTC medications by 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.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Content	Page
<i>Letter of recommendation</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>Letter of approval</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Tables of contents</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>x</i>
CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION	1-7
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 The objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Research Questions	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	6
1.6 Limitation of the study	7
1.7 Definition of the important terms used	7
CHAPTER II : REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	8-17
2.1 Theoretical Review	8
2.2 Review of Previous Study	17
CHAPTER III : RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	18-20
3.1 Rationale of the Site Selection	18
3.2 Research Design	18
3.3 Sampling	19
3.4 Nature and Source of Data	19
3.5 Analysis and Interpretation of Data	20

CHAPTER IV: BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL		
	CHARACTERISTICS	21-28
4.1	Age of Informants	21
4.2	Sex Composition of Informants	22
4.3	Composition of Informants by Castes and Ethnic group	23
4.4	Composition of Informants by Religion	24
4.5	Composition of Informants by Marital Status	24
4.6	Composition of Informants by Educational Status	25
4.7	Composition of Informants by Main Source of Family Income	26
4.8	Composition of Informants by Family Size	27
4.9	Composition of Informants by Monthly Income of Family	27
4.10	Composition of Respondent by Types of Residency	28
CHAPTER V: KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION ABOUT OTC		29-34
5.1	Pharmacist a good source of information about minor health problems	29
5.2	Preference to visit pharmacy rather than doctor	30
5.3	Source of knowledge about OTC medicine	31
5.4	Perception towards the cost of OTC medicines	32
5.5	Aware about the correct dose and frequency of the OTC medicines	32
5.6	Thinks OTC drugs are primarily used for minor illness.	32
5.7	Information about the adverse effects OTC medications	34
5.8	Effectiveness of the treatment by OTC medicine	35
5.9	Attitude on OTC medicines is always safe to use	36
5.10	Health problems/sickness successfully treated with OTC medicine	36
5.11	Conditions for using OTC medicines	37
5.12	Composition by main reasons for using OTC medicines	38
CHAPTER VI PRACTICES ABOUT OVER-THE-COUNTER		
	MEDICATION	35-54
6.1	First step informants take after health problems	39
6.2	Second step taken if the first step doesn't work	40

6.3	Waiting time before starting the second step treatment plan	41
6.4	Influencer to take OTC medicine	42
6.5	Distance of the nearest hospital or health facility from the residing area	43
6.6	Distance of the nearest pharmacy from the resident	43
6.7	Conditions for using OTC medicines	44
6.8	Time to start OTC medication after symptoms of sickness	45
6.9	Way of purchasing OTC medicines	46
6.10	Reading and following instructions given before taking non-prescribed medicines	47
6.11	Check expiry date of OTC medicine	48
6.12	Place for storing OTC drugs	49
6.13	Ask the pharmacist about use of medicine	49
6.14	Understand all the information provided by the pharmacists	50
6.15	Follow all the instruction accordingly as pharmacist's advice	51
6.16	Practice related to dose of the medicine	52
6.17	Last time OTC medication taken	53
6.18	Experience of any adverse effect due to OTC medicines previously	53
CHAPTER 7 : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION		55-62
7.1	Summary	55
7.2	Key findings of the study	57
	7.2.1 Socio-demographic background of informants	57
	7.2.2. Knowledge and Perception on OTC medicines.	58
	7.2.3. Practice and Influencing factors	59
7.3	Conclusion	61
<i>References</i>		
<i>Annex</i>		

LIST OF TABLE

Table no	Title	Page
4.1	Age group of informants	21
4.2	Distribution of informants by gender	22
4.3	Distribution of informants by castes and Ethnic group	23
4.4	Composition of informants by religion	24
4.5	Composition of informants by marital status	25
4.6	Composition of informants by educational status	25
4.7	Composition of informants by main source of family income	26
4.8	Composition of informants by family size	27
4.9	Composition of informants by monthly income of family	28
4.10	Composition of informants by types of residency	28
5.1	Pharmacist, a good source of information	29
5.2	Preference to visit pharmacy rather than doctor	30
5.3	Informants by source of knowledge about OTC medicines	31
5.4	Informants by the cost of OTC medicines	32
5.5	Awareness about the correct dose and frequency of the OTC	33
5.6	Thinks OTC drugs are primarily used for minor illnesses & injuries	33
5.7	Information about the adverse effects of OTC medications	34
5.8	Effectiveness of the treatment by OTC medicines	35
5.9	Attitude on OTC medicines are always safe to use.	36
5.10	Sickness successfully treated with OTC medicine	36
5.11.	Informants by conditions for using OTC medicines	37
5.12	Composition by main reasons for using OTC medicines	38
6.1	Informants by measure taken first when fall sick	39
6.2	Second step taken if the first effort doesn't work	40
6.3	Waiting time before starting the second step treatment plan	41
6.4	Influencer to take OTC medicine	41
6.5	Distance of the nearest hospital from the residing area	43

6.6	Distance of the nearest pharmacy from the resident	44
6.7	Conditions for using OTC medicines	45
6.8	Informants by time to start OTC after symptoms of sickness	45
6.9	Ways of purchasing OTC medicines	46
6.10	Reading and following instructions given before taking in non-prescribed medicines	47
6.11	Check expiry date of OTC medicine	47
6.12	Composition of informants by Place for storing OTC drugs	49
6.13	Ask the pharmacist about use of the medicine	50
6.14	Informants by understand all the information provided	50
6.15	Follows all the Instruction accordingly	51
6.16	Practice related to dose of the medicine	52
6.17	Time when OTC medication taken recently	53
6.18	Informants by experienced any adverse effect due to OTC	53

ABBREVIATION

EM:	Explanatory model
MOH	Minister of Health
OPD:	Outpatient door
OTC:	Over-the-counter
WHO:	World Health Organization