

Knowledge, habits and beliefs regarding usage of antibiotics - comparative study of medical and non-medical students from Nis University, Serbia

Nemanja R. Kutlesic¹✉ and Aleksandra Jovanovic²

¹University of Camerino, Department for Biosciences and Veterinary Medicine, Camerino MC, Italy; ²University of Nis, Faculty of Medicine, Nis, Serbia;

✉Corresponding author, E-mail: nemanja.kutlesic@studenti.unicam.it.

Abstract

Introduction. Many studies in the developing world have reported a high level of ignorance among youth towards proper usage of antibiotics. This study wanted to examine the knowledge, beliefs and habits of Nis University students regarding this important topic and discover whether an anticipated difference in knowledge, beliefs and habits existed between medical and non-medical students.

Materials and methods. The data was acquired through an online questionnaire which addressed knowledge, beliefs and habits regarding antibiotics. Obtained data was classified into two groups and tested for statistical significance using the Chi-squared test. The study took into account the margin of error for the sample of 5%. The study adhered to principles of the Helsinki declaration.

Results. The research showed that the majority of students were able to correctly identify bacteria as the main target of antibiotics. More students from non-medical faculties thought viral infections can be treated with antibiotics (37.35% vs. 7.45% of medical, $SE_D^*=0.042$, $p<0.05$), and identified incorrectly *Paracetamol* as an antibiotic (42.17% vs. 8.51% of medical, $SE_D^*=0.043$, $p<0.05$).

However, a similar percentage in both groups claimed they interrupted their regimen before the prescribed time and admitted to alcohol usage.

Conclusion. While students of the medical faculty demonstrated much better knowledge and beliefs on antibiotics, their habits were not found to be significantly different. Overall, a large percentage of students from both

* SE_D = Standard error of the difference (between the two groups).

groups uses the medicines as they please. These results are similar to available studies from the developing world. Campaigns are necessary to inform students better on the subject.

Keywords: antibiotics, antibiotic resistance, appropriate use of antibiotics, public health, university students

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