

THERAPEUTIC ADVANCES in *Drug Safety*

Contents

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CONFERENCES (ABSTRACTS FROM CONFERENCES)	9
ORAL COMMUNICATIONS	17
POSTER PRESENTATIONS: PATIENT-CENTERED SAFETY	25

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Abstract-Post-71 Patient-Centered Safety*Self-Medication*

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Background: Self-medication allows individuals to treat minor health issues without a medical prescription, facilitated by the availability of over-the-counter (OTC) medicines [1,2]. This practice requires healthcare professionals, particularly pharmacists, to play a key role in ensuring the safe and rational use of medicines. **Objectives:** This study aimed to understand the motivations behind self-medication in Portugal and to promote informed and responsible behaviour among the population. **Methods:** An observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted between February and June 2025 via an online questionnaire. The target sample was 385 individuals, with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. A total of 377 participants, all aged 20 or above and residing in mainland Portugal, completed the questionnaire. **Results:** A total of 91.8% reported engaging in self-medication, mostly women (77.7%), young adults aged 20–24 (58.1%), and residents in the North (60.1%). The majority held a university degree (54.9%) and were single (75.7%). The main motivations were prior knowledge (80.1%) and easy access to medicines (36.4%). The most commonly used medicines were non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) (87%), antipyretics (67.1%), and antihistamines (32.4%). Although participants showed autonomy in decision-making, healthcare professionals were the main source of influence (51.6%) when purchasing medicines. **Conclusions:** Self-medication is highly prevalent in Portugal and is largely driven by convenience and confidence. The study assessed motivations through participant responses and sociodemographic data, revealing the importance of health literacy. Responsible self-medication behaviour was promoted through an educational questionnaire and critical data analysis. Strengthening the role of pharmacy professionals is essential in guiding the public and ensuring the rational use of medicines.

Keywords: self-medication, role of healthcare professionals, risks of inappropriate medication use.

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Abstract-Post-77 Patient-Centered Safety*The effect of antihistamines on the cardiovascular system: a systematic review*

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Background: Antihistamines are widely used for allergic diseases but have been associated with adverse cardiovascular effects. Once considered rare, these effects have gained clinical relevance due to population ageing, polypharmacy, and comorbidities [1]. Despite case reports and narrative reviews, recent systematic reviews are lacking. **Objectives:** To critically assess current evidence on the cardiovascular effects of antihistamines. **Methodology:** A systematic literature review was conducted using PubMed and ScienceDirect, following PRISMA guidelines. Studies published from January 2013 to May 2025 were considered. Of 99 records identified, 18 duplicates were removed, 75 were excluded by title and abstract, and one after full-text review. Five studies were included. Designs varied (case reports, cohort studies, clinical trials, experimental research), and methodological quality was assessed using Joanna Briggs Institute checklists, selected for their adaptability to multiple study types. Both adult and paediatric populations were

included. **Results:** The findings suggest a possible link between first-generation H1 antihistamines and increased risk of arrhythmias and ischaemic cardiac events, particularly in children. Some studies also noted potential therapeutic benefits in specific contexts, such as long COVID. Overall, evidence remains limited by methodological heterogeneity and small sample sizes. **Conclusions:** The results support caution in prescribing antihistamines, especially in vulnerable populations, and reinforce the need for further robust studies to better define their cardiovascular safety.

Keywords: antihistamines, cardiovascular system, adverse reactions

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Abstract-Post-78 Patient-Centered Safety

Assessment of patient knowledge on medications for irritable bowel syndrome

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Background: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a multifactorial gastrointestinal disorder that may involve genetic factors, as well as physiological and psychological responses. It affects approximately 10-20% of the world's population. Although not fatal, it has a significant impact on the quality of life. Knowledge about treatment is essential, as it plays a crucial role in symptom relief [1,2].

Objectives: To assess patients' knowledge about IBS medication and emergency medication administration. **Methods:** Observational, descriptive, cross-sectional study using a non-probabilistic convenience sample. The pilot study included 22 patients at Padre Américo Hospital, Vale do Sousa, through an anonymous telephone survey, including medication name, action, dosage, duration, precautions, side effects, interactions, storage, and SOS use. Approved by the hospital ethics committee, participants signed informed consent and were anonymously identified using numerical codes. **Results:** The sample was predominantly female (72.7%) with a mean age of 50 years. The majority (72.7%) knew what to administer and how to administer emergency medication (antidiarrheal, antiflatulents, laxatives, antispasmodics, benzodiazepines), and 63.6% demonstrated adequate knowledge about the diet that worsens symptoms. Significant gaps were found in knowledge regarding dosage, precautions, adverse reactions, contraindication, and medication storage. **Conclusions:** The present study helped identify existing gaps in patients' knowledge, demonstrating that it can be a useful tool for assessing awareness of therapeutic interventions in larger patient samples with this condition. Health literacy is crucial to increasing medication adherence and safety. Limitations include the small sample size and the homogeneity of the participants. Future perspectives should include larger and more diverse samples.

Keywords: irritable bowel syndrome, medication knowledge, health literacy

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