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### Self-Medication of Antibiotics and Analgesics by Parents for Dental Problems of Children

Simy Mathew<sup>1</sup>, Alexander M Luke<sup>2</sup>, Anoud Aqeel Alhashmi<sup>2</sup>, Saeeda Almuhanadi<sup>2</sup>,  
Raghad Hashim<sup>2</sup>, Krishna Prasad Shetty<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> United Arab Emirates University, Institute of Public Health, Al Ain, UAE

<sup>2</sup> Ajman University, College of Dentistry, Ajman, UAE.

e-mail address: drsimymathew@outlook.com

**Background & Aims:** Parents often refuse the support of their doctors, and many times use over-the-counter medications to treat various problems in their children. For the most part, parents have good intentions: they are driven by a genuine desire to help their child since they cannot see him/her in pain. In case of overuse of antibiotics in the treatment of dental problems, a child can develop resistance to them and not react to the medicine in the future. The main aim of this study was to investigate the prevalence of parental self-medication for oral health problems in their children.

**Methods:** Self-administered questionnaires were distributed among parents, who had children aged 3 to 18, at various locations in the United Arab Emirates. The data collection instruments were distributed as online surveys as well as physical questionnaires. The data was collected between January and May 2019. Only people who could read and write English or Arabic were included in the study.

**Results:** For dental problems in children, 87% of the sample reported self-medication. Majority of the respondents were mothers (76%), and pain was reported as the most common reason for self-medication (83%). Almost 65% of the parents reported that friends and family were the primary source of information for self-medication. Reasons related to time and expenses were the most reported reasons as to why parents resorted to self-medication for their children's oral health problems

**Conclusion:** Self-medication of antibiotics and analgesics was prevalent in a large proportion of parents in the United Arab Emirates. Sources of medical information, the prevalence of dental pain, low insurance coverage, and accessibility to analgesics are key factors that encourage self-medication in parents to manage dental problems of their children. It is important to raise awareness among parents about the misuse of medications in children.

**Keywords:** self-medication; child dental pain; antibiotics; analgesics

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6528-126X