

## **A Study on Antibiotic Use by Patients with Symptoms Suggestive of Influenza or Common Cold for less than Three Days in Outpatient Department of Divisional Hospital, Udawalawa**

Madushani G.A.D.<sup>1#</sup>, Kommalage M.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

# *Corresponding author: dinupamamshani@gmail.com*

**Background:** Development of antibiotic resistance is a global challenge. Some of the factors contributing to the development of antibiotic resistance are prescribing antibiotics when they are not indicated (or required) and self-medication with antibiotics. Irrational prescription of antibiotics for viral infections is not uncommon.

**Objective:** To assess the type of antibiotics used by the patients who attended to outpatient department (OPD), Divisional Hospital, Udawalawa with symptoms suggestive of influenza or common cold for less than three days

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted with 629 participants. Data were collected with an interviewer administered questionnaire in a convenient sample. The patients were categorized in to two groups based on the symptoms (group-1 - runny nose, sneezing, cough, nasal obstruction, sore throat; group-2 - fever, headache, tiredness, myalgia, bodyaches, malaise, hoarseness, chillness). Those who have symptoms in group-2 without any symptoms of group-1 were excluded from the study. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and Chi-square test using SPSS version 25.

**Results:** Sample comprised of 42.9% males and 57.1% females. Hospital OPD had prescribed antibiotics for 528 (83.9%) of them. Amoxicillin (86.17%) is the most frequently prescribed antibiotic. Cephalexin (13.06%), Erythromycin (0.57%) and Flucloxacillin (0.19%) are the other commonly prescribed antibiotics. Before coming to the hospital, 13 patients had used antibiotics without a prescription. Majority of the patients (77.1%) do not have a basic understanding about used antibiotics.

**Conclusions:** The study found that over 83.9% patients with symptoms suggestive of influenza or common cold for less than 3 days received antibiotics. These findings suggest having strict guidelines on antibiotic use.

**Keywords:** *Antibiotics, Common cold, Influenza*