

ABSTRACT

Illness Behaviour with Special Emphasis on Self-medication: A Survey of the Diabetic and Hypertensive Clients of the August Town/Hermitage Community Health Centre Kingston, Jamaica

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The illness and health related behaviour of people is a major concern of health workers and policy makers.

A study was conducted among 97 residents of the August Town and Hermitage communities in Kingston, Jamaica, of clients who were diagnosed and being treated for diabetes mellitus and hypertension at the August Town/Hermitage Community Health Centre, Kingston. Data was collected by questionnaire and from the clients health centre records.

The study was aimed at elucidating some of the determinants of the illness and health-related behaviour with special emphasis on the practice of self-medication using home remedies and non-prescription drugs.

The study confirmed that self-medication was a common first line mode of therapy. This was so despite the finding of a predominantly negative attitude to self-treatment. In addition, clients relied heavily on friends and relatives for information concerning self-medication.

No statistically significant relationship was found between self-medication and age, sex, marital status, occupation, crowding, perceived health status, illness, level of education, attitude and the frequency of contact with the health services.

It was recommended that since self-medication was a common practice, health workers should become conscious of this and develop educational programmes to capitalize on the positive aspects of this practice and monitor any possible deleterious effects.