

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Toward Self-Medicating Eye Symptoms in Saudi Arabia	
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Abstract:	<p>Purpose</p> <p>Self-medication is the selection and use of drugs by individuals to treat self-diagnosed diseases or symptoms. While some patients regard self-medicating as harmless, it is far from being a safe practice. The aim of this study was to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices toward self-medicating eye symptoms in Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>Patients and Methods</p> <p>A cross-sectional study was conducted through an online questionnaire on a study population that consisted of Saudi nationals aged 18 and older who were using or had previously used ophthalmic medications.</p> <p>Results</p> <p>Among the 524 responses obtained, 79.4% were female, and more than half were less than 40 years old. Participants admitting to practicing ophthalmic self-medication measured 62.4%. The most commonly self-prescribed ophthalmic medications were artificial tears (n=276), followed by antiallergic (n=57) and antibiotic medications (n=33). Many participants reported that the reason for self-treatment was for repeated and simple symptoms that did not require professional care. While approximately 51% showed high levels of knowledge about ophthalmic medications, no significant relationship was seen with their choice to self-medicate (P=0.153).</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Despite detecting a high level of knowledge and acceptable practices and attitudes among participants, a high incidence of self-medication was observed. This effect was mostly attributed to long hospital waiting times and patient self-diagnosis. Increasing the number of healthcare units and properly educating patients on ophthalmic medications may help decrease the incidence of self-medication.</p>