KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS REGARDING ANTIBIOTIC USE FOR UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS: A SURVEY OF THAI STUDENTS

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Abstract. The objectives of this study were to determine knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of antibiotic use in upper respiratory tract infections (URI) among students at different educational levels (Grade 12 students and high vocational students) and to examine factors influencing antibiotic use for URI. A cross-sectional questionnaire survey was used with students in one large and one small city in Thailand. Of 712 respondents, more than 75\% of all groups had misconceptions on the benefits of antibiotics. Grade 12 students, especially those in the big city, had the highest knowledge scores about antibiotic use in URI, while high vocational students had the lowest. Incomplete taking of a course of antibiotic treatment recommended by health providers was found in more than 45\% of respondents in each group. In addition, approximately half of them had taken antibiotics for less than 5 days. Knowledge about antibiotic use in URI, attitudes towards antibiotic use, attitudes towards antibiotic prescribing for treating colds by physicians and by drugstores, belief in the common use of antibiotics for colds, and expectations of receiving antibiotics from physicians significantly influenced intentions and behaviors about antibiotic use. Students had misconceptions on antibiotic use for URI. The Ministry of Education should incorporate information on proper antibiotic use in the formal health education. Reliable sources of information on the correct use of antibiotics should also be more widely available to improve the use of antibiotics.

Keywords: knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, antibiotic use, upper respiratory infection, Thailand

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