

SELF MEDICATION – REASONS AND CONSEQUENCES

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The term self medication is used when people evaluate their own health condition and prescribe their own treatment.

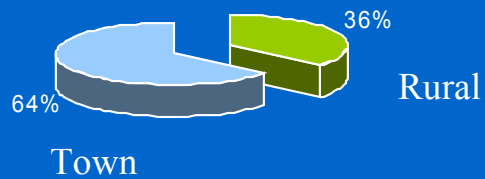
Self-treatment can also mean modification of MD's therapy by the patient, like changing the medicament, irregular use or giving up.

The aim of the work was to estimate the characteristics of self medication as a medical and social phenomenon

Data from the questionnaires made for this purpose was analyzed in order to understand the prevalence, type and reasons for auto medication. The inquiry included 174 men and 186 women from the Nis District

The structure of the examined group:

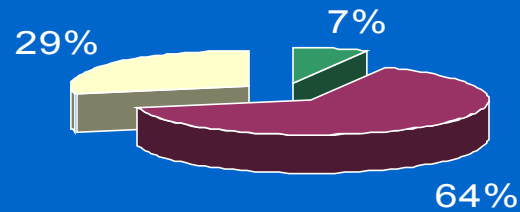
Distribution by residence



Distribution by gender



Distribution by age



Distribution of self medication:

Only 12% women and 18% men do not use unprescribed medication and do not change the therapy

We found there is: **total**, **partial** and **false** auto-medication

Total auto medication has no medical control – the patient gives “diagnosis” by himself and orders the therapy

Partial auto medication means that patient is not compliant; there is some control by a doctor and involves all kinds of modifications of therapy or cessation of therapy by the patient.

There is a **false** or unintentional self-medication as well, which is result of circumstances, without person's intent to be its own doctor.

Women are more prone to total auto medication than men while the therapy modification is almost equal

The youngest and middle age category are inclined to totally auto medication but they **do not change** the ordered therapy. The oldest population have **opposite** behavior

Auto medication of the oldest patients:

- secondary benefit
- taking drugs for somebody else
- therapy modification

Auto medication is caused by patient
or doctors

Reasons for automedication by patient:

- he **knows what he needs** (acute respiratory diseases, chronic patients)
- he **has prejudices** about kind, shape or dose of the medicament and changes the therapy
- he **cannot wait** for medical treatment
- he has **no money**
- he has **no confidence** in doctors

Doctor's responsibility for auto medication:

- he has a favorite medicament and orders uniform therapy
- he uncritically takes suggestions

Damaging effects of auto medication are **medical** (damaging for patient himself) and **financial** (damaging for the whole community)

Damaging for patient himself:

- wrong estimation of state, level, symptoms

- super infection caused by bacteria, viruses and fungi

- the colon ecosystem disturbances caused by antibiotics

- overdoses and subclinical doses

- chronification, invalidity

- resistance

- allergy

- forbidden combination of drugs and food or drinks

Damaging for the whole community:
expenses of non-reasonable therapy
and illnesses in phase of
deterioration or chronification

Considering the auto medication prevention, measures are:

- expansion of the health institution network

- introduction of a national computerised medical record system

- continual education of doctors and nurses by their professional organization

- education and motivation of patients by government and nongovernmental organizations, patient's clubs and mass media