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Self-medication practice in pregnant women from central Mexico

Self-medication during pregnancy represents a serious threat to mother and child health. The objective of this study was to evaluate the prevalence and the factors associated with self-medication among Mexican women living in the central region of Mexico. This is a descriptive interview-study of 1798 pregnant women or women who were pregnant no more than 3 years ago when the interview was carried out. Data analysis was carried out with chi-square analysis and odds ratio. The prevalence of self-medication (allopathic drugs, medicinal plants, and other products, including vitamins, food supplements, among others) was 21.9%. The factors associated ($p < 0.05$) with self-medication were: higher education (college and postgraduate), smoking, and consumption of alcohol. Smoking was the strongest factor (OR: 2.536; 1.46–4.42) associated to self-medication during pregnancy, followed by consumption of alcohol (OR: 2.06; 1.38–3.08), and higher education (OR: 1.607; 1.18–2.19). Medicinal plant consumption was associated with nausea, constipation, migraine, and cold ($p < 0.05$), whereas the self-medication of allopathy was associated with gastritis and migraine ($p < 0.05$). Self-medication was influenced mainly by a relative or friend, who recommended the use of herbal medicine/allopathic medication. Two of the most common medicinal plants (arnica and ruda) here informed are reported to induce abortion or toxicity during pregnancy. The findings showed that self-medication (medicinal plants and allopathic medication) is a common practice among pregnant women from central Mexico. Adequate counseling of pregnant women by healthcare professionals about the potential risks of self-medication with herbal medicine and allopathic drugs during pregnancy is strongly warranted.

Biography

Angel Josabad Alonso-Castro is a professor at the University of Guanajuato, Mexico since 2015. He obtained his doctorate in the National Autonomous University of Mexico. He has published 61 research articles in journals indexed in the Journal of Citation Reports and published 4 book chapters in international books. His research interests are the pharmacology of natural products and ethnobiological studies. He is reviewer of the following journals: Journal of Ethnopharmacology, Phytomedicine, BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine, Biomedicine and Pharmacotherapy, Asian Pacific Journal of Tropical Medicine, and Revista Brasileira de Farmacognosia, among other journals.

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