

## Use and Understanding of Painkillers: A Survey-Based Study

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### ABSTRACT

Painkillers are commonly used medicines to relieve pain from headaches, flu, menstrual cramps, and other conditions. While they provide relief, frequent or incorrect use can lead to health risks such as dependency, side effects, and long-term health issues. This study is based on a survey of 55 people to understand how often they use painkillers, what influences their choices, and how much they know about the risks. The results show that while most people take painkillers responsibly, many are unaware of their possible dangers. The study highlights the need for better awareness about the safe use of painkillers. The survey results show that painkillers are widely used, but there are gaps in public awareness about their risks. While many people take painkillers correctly, some take higher doses or do not read the instructions.

**KEYWORDS:** Painkillers, headache, menstrual cramps, flu.

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### INTRODUCTION

Painkillers, also called analgesics, are used by millions of people worldwide to treat common pains. Over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers like paracetamol and ibuprofen are easily available and widely used[1], but not everyone understands the correct way to use them. Taking too many painkillers or using them for a long time can lead to side effects like liver damage, stomach issues, or even addiction[2]. Some painkillers, like

ibuprofen, can increase the risk of heart disease if used incorrectly. This study aims to explore people's habits and knowledge about painkillers through a survey[3]. There is some ambiguity between the positive and negative effects of analgesic[4], according to reports in the scientific and popular media. This, together with the busy lifestyle of students[5], may cause confusion and abuse of several over the counter (OTC) (nonprescription) medications, like analgesic[6]. To find out if students use

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analgesics responsibly and are aware of their negative consequences, fifty structured interviews were conducted[7]. It was noted that many of them combined other prescribed medications with one or more over the counter drugs. Despite the possibility of adverse consequences, the majority of people take OTC oral painkillers. Ibuprofen is produced in Pakistan under many brand names by various pharmaceutical companies and is available both OTC and with a prescription[8]. There are several ibuprofen strengths available for oral usage[9]. Both in industrialized and developing nations, the use of over the counter medications including analgesics and flu shots for self-medication has increased. According to reports, one of the pharmacological groups most frequently linked to drug related issues, such as adverse drug responses, is analgesics[10]. Worldwide, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) and analgesics like paracetamol are widely utilized[11]. The prevalence of analgesic use rose with age, 67.2% of Thai people aged 15 or older using these drugs in 2008. While almost all NSAIDs are pharmacist-only medications that pharmacists can give as needed without a prescription, paracetamol is a nonprescription medication that can be bought from pharmacies or retail stores.

### Methodology:

A survey was conducted among 55 individuals to gather information about their painkiller use. The survey included multiple-choice questions about:

- How often they take painkillers
- Their reasons for using them

- Which painkillers they prefer
- How much they know about the risks and side effects
- Their behavior when taking other medications alongside painkillers

The responses were collected and analyzed to identify trends in painkiller usage and awareness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. How Often Do People Use Painkillers?

72.5% of people said they take painkillers, while 27.5% said they do not[12]. The most common reason for taking painkillers was headaches (54.9%), followed by menstrual pain (13.7%), flu symptoms (11.8%), and dental pain (8.9%)[13]. 25.5% take painkillers daily, 17.6% weekly, 47.1% monthly, and 9.8% yearly. These results show that painkillers are frequently used, with a significant number of people taking them regularly for common issues like headaches and menstrual cramps.

### 2. What Painkillers Do People Prefer, and How Many Tablets Do They Take?

64.7% of people take only one tablet per dose, while 35.3% take two or more tablets at a time. Paracetamol was the most commonly used painkiller (35.3%), followed by ibuprofen (17.6%). The main reasons for choosing a particular painkiller included brand name (47.1%), the type of pain they were experiencing (33.3%), and recommendations from friends or family (15.7%). While most people stick to the recommended dose, some take more than one tablet, which can be risky if done frequently.

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The preference for brand-name painkillers suggests that marketing plays a role in people's choices.

### 3. Awareness of Risks and Side Effects:

Only 21.6% always read the leaflet that comes with painkillers before taking them, while 45.1% never do. When asked which painkiller is linked to heart disease or stroke, 56.9% correctly said ibuprofen, but 25.5% incorrectly thought paracetamol posed a risk. 51% of respondents identified codeine as the most addictive painkiller, but 27.5% mistakenly thought paracetamol was addictive. These findings suggest that many people are not fully aware of the risks associated with different painkillers. Studies have shown that ibuprofen and similar drugs (NSAIDs) can increase the risk of heart disease when used in high doses for long periods. (Bally et al., 2017). Similarly, codeine, an opioid painkiller, has a high potential for addiction. (Volkow et al., 2016)

### 4. Painkillers for Chronic Conditions and Interaction with Other Medicines:

20% of respondents take painkillers regularly for chronic conditions, while 80% do not. When asked what they would do if they needed painkillers while taking regular medication: 40% said they would consult a doctor or pharmacist first. 36.4% said they would stop taking their regular medication and take the painkiller instead, which could be dangerous. This shows that while some people seek professional advice, others may stop their prescribed medication to take

painkillers, which could lead to health complications[14-16].

### 5. Who Uses Painkillers the Most? (Age and Gender Trends)

Most respondents were aged 21-25 years (41.3%), with fewer people in other age groups. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 50.9% male and 49.1% female respondents. The results suggest that young adults are the most frequent users of painkillers, possibly due to stress, work, or lifestyle habits.

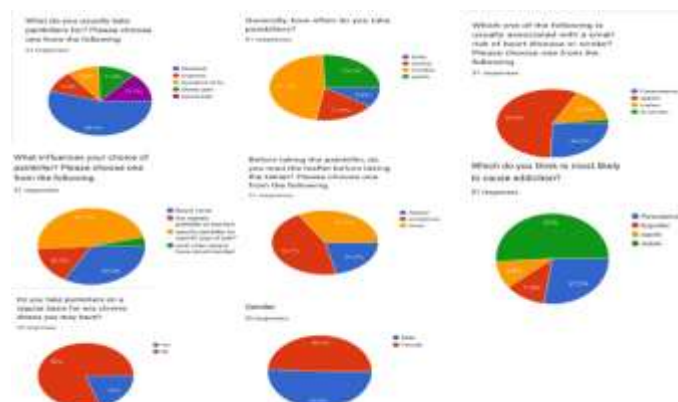


Figure 1: All data presented in form of graph

## CONCLUSION

The survey results show that painkillers are widely used, but there are gaps in public awareness about their risks. While many people take painkillers correctly, some take higher doses or do not read the instructions. The misconception that paracetamol is addictive and the lack of awareness about the risks of ibuprofen suggest a need for better education on safe painkiller use[17].

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### Recommendations:

1. **Increase Public Awareness:** More efforts should be made to educate people about painkiller risks and proper use through public health campaigns.

2. **Better Labeling and Warnings:** Painkiller packaging should include clearer warnings about possible side effects and risks.

3. **Encourage Alternative Pain Management:** People should be encouraged to try non-drug methods like exercise, physiotherapy, or relaxation techniques for managing pain.

4. **Consult Healthcare Professionals:** People should seek advice from doctors or pharmacists before taking painkillers, especially if they are on other medications. By taking these steps, we can help people use painkillers safely and reduce health risks.

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