

ASSESSING HEALTH BEHAVIORS AMONG STUDENTS: A SURVEY ANALYSIS**Abdimomunova Begimai***senior lecturer, Department of Public Health, Osh State University -international medical faculty. ORCID**ID: 0000-0001-9360-7095, SPIN-coe: 5502-832,**Author ID: 1089291***Eman Firdous***4th Year MBBS student. Osh State University-International Medical Faculty**<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14007164>***Abstract**

A major public health concern is the increasing incidence of respiratory infections (RIs), particularly in the winter months (November –February). The purpose of this survey is to learn more about the attitudes, habits, and practices of college students regarding the use of antibiotics, RI prevention, and treatment. The results highlight serious gaps in public health knowledge on mask compliance, hand hygiene, self-medication, and antibiotic resistance. The findings highlight the need for better health education, focused interventions, and regulations to strengthen student populations' preventative measures against respiratory illnesses.

Keywords: Respiratory infections, antibiotic resistance, university students, hygiene practices, mask usage, hand hygiene, self-medication, public health, infection prevention, antibiotics misuse, self-medication, antibiotic misuse, health behaviors, social gatherings, antibiotic awareness, healthcare accessibility, prevention strategies, antibiotic overuse, viral infections, health education.

Objective:

The objective of this article is to investigate and evaluate the attitudes and practices of college students with relation to the use of antibiotics, the prevention of respiratory infections, and their treatment. The article looks at survey data on self-medication, mask compliance, hygiene practices, and antibiotic resistance awareness in order to find knowledge and behavior gaps in public health. In the end, it seeks to offer information that can guide health actions, enhance infection prevention strategies, and increase student understanding of the risks associated with antibiotic abuse.

Introduction:

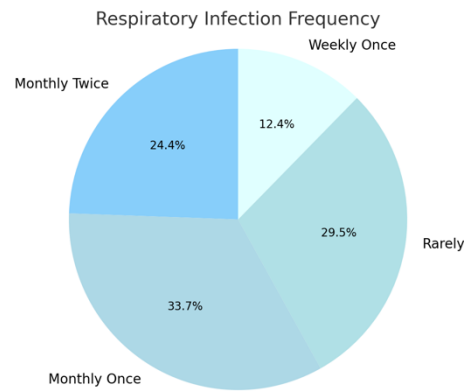
Respiratory infections (RIs) are one of the leading causes of illness worldwide, especially in the winter when viral illnesses like the common cold and influenza are most prevalent. The fast spread of infectious illnesses is made possible by university settings, where students regularly meet in crowded environments. Furthermore, students might not have the time or means to get the right medical attention, which could result in high rates of self-medication and possible antibiotic abuse. Developing public health interventions targeted at lowering illness rates and battling antibiotic resistance requires an understanding of student behavior with regard to infection management and antibiotic use.

This paper examines the results of a recent survey performed among university students to evaluate their habits concerning RI prevention, mask using, cleanliness behaviors, and antibiotic consumption. The survey also investigates the level of awareness among students regarding antibiotic resistance, a growing global health concern.

Approach:

This study was conducted through a structured survey distributed to university students during the colder months. The survey employed a combination of multiple-choice questions and options allowing respondents to select multiple answers for certain items. The questions addressed several key areas, including the frequency of respiratory infections, personal hygiene habits, mask-wearing practices, the use of antibiotics, and awareness of antibiotic resistance. A total of 19 questions were asked, and the data was analyzed to understand patterns in student behavior and their implications for public health.

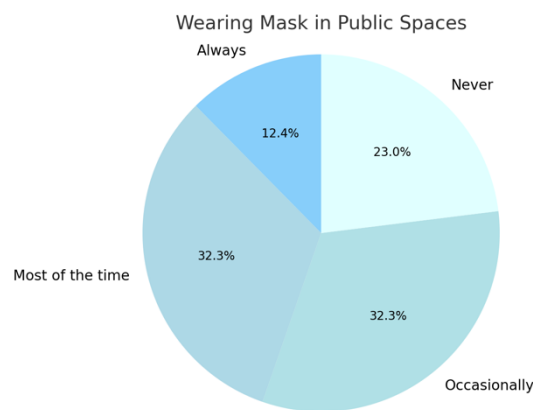
Key Findings:**1. Frequency of Respiratory Infections:**



According to the survey's findings, students frequently have respiratory infections between November and February. Significantly more respondents reported they had a respiratory infection once a month, compared to 24.43% who said they experienced an infection twice a month. Given the high frequency of respiratory

ailments in the winter, this data implies that students are especially susceptible to infections, most likely as a result of their living conditions and frequent social interactions. A lesser percentage reported infections every week, while 29% reported illnesses infrequently.

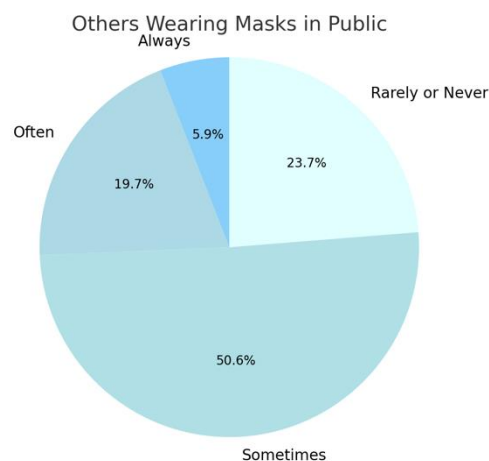
2. Mask-Wearing Behavior:



Through the survey, the use of masks—a vital defense against respiratory infections—was investigated. Just 12% of those surveyed said they always wore a mask when they experienced respiratory illness symptoms. A significant 23% of respondents never wore masks in busy public places, even while they were exhibiting symptoms, although the majority wore them

infrequently. Despite the well-established advantages of mask wear in lowering the spread of airborne illnesses, this research indicates that mask compliance is still poor.

3. Observations of Mask Usage in Public:



The responses showed a similarly lenient attitude when asked about their observations of individuals wearing masks. Just 5.9% of students said they had seen people on campus and in public always wearing masks. While 23.73% of respondents said that others wore

masks infrequently or never, half of the respondents (50.61%) saw masks being used occasionally. These results cast doubt on the general compliance with public health recommendations, especially in congested academic environments.

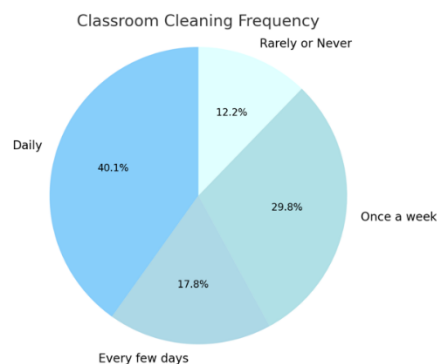
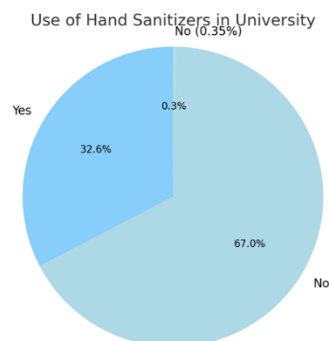


4. Hand Hygiene Practices:

Another significant issue that was investigated was hand hygiene, which is essential for avoiding respiratory infections. While 31.06% of students said they washed their hands multiple times a day, 31% said they only washed their hands when they had to. It is concerning to note that 8% of people rarely or never wash

their hands before eating, which is a dangerous practice that raises the possibility of virus transmission. Stronger public health message regarding the significance of consistent hand cleanliness is required, as seen by this disparity in handwashing frequency.

5. Use of Hand Sanitizers and Cleaning Practices:



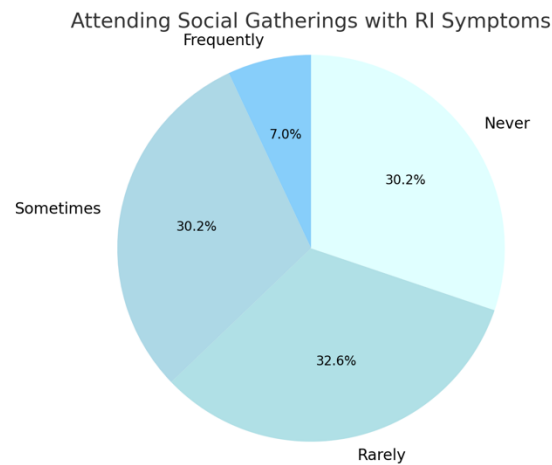
The use of hand sanitizers is another preventive measure examined in the survey. Despite the wide-

spread availability of sanitizers, 67.02% of students reported not using hand sanitizers in their university. Only 32% reported using sanitizers, highlighting a gap

in the adoption of this convenient preventive measure. Moreover, 40% of students noted that their classrooms were cleaned daily, but 12.22% reported rare or no cleaning of their learning environments. This raises

concerns about the adequacy of sanitation efforts on campus.

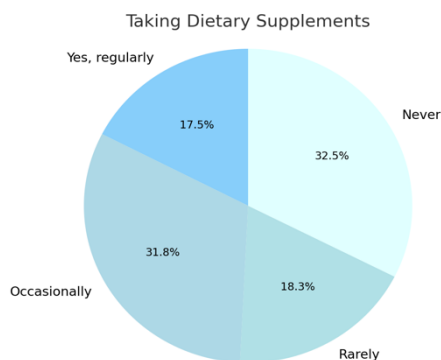
6. Social Interactions During Infection:



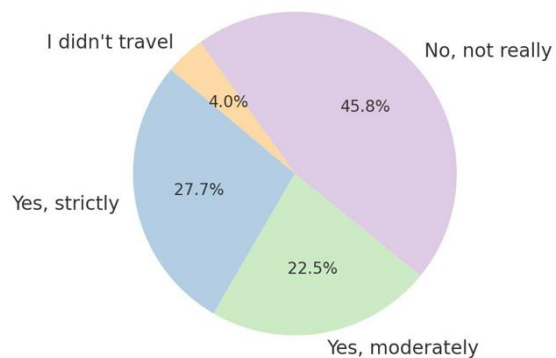
Despite showing signs of a respiratory infection, a sizable percentage of respondents said they continued to engage with others. 30% acknowledged having sporadic close contact with other pupils when infected, compared to 32% who said they rarely did so. Furthermore, 7% of students went to social events despite their

symptoms, which raises the possibility of virus transmission.

7. Use of Dietary Supplements and Precautions While Traveling:

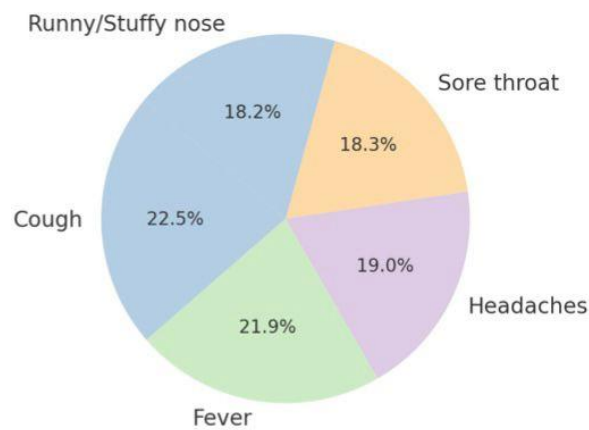


Of those surveyed, just 17% consistently took dietary supplements to boost immunological health, and 31% occasionally did so. Only 27% of students took precise care when traveling, especially when using public transportation like trams, and 45% acknowledged that they did not follow any safety instructions. This



emphasizes the need for better messaging, especially in public settings, about immune support and adherence to preventive measures.

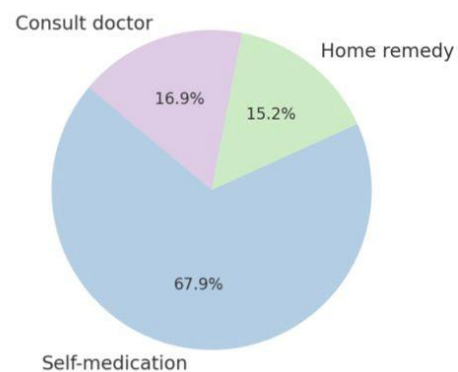
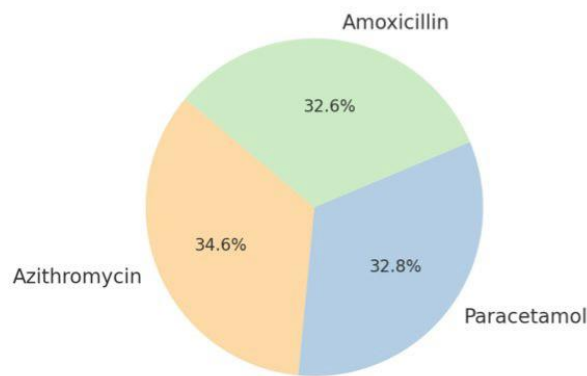
8. Symptoms Experienced During Respiratory Infections:



When students had respiratory infections, the most common symptoms were fever (22%), headaches (19%), and cough (22%). Other common complaints included fatigue (7.51%), runny or stuffy nose (18%), and sore throat (18%). These results highlight the necessity for all-encompassing treatment strategies that

take into account the diverse experiences of individuals afflicted and show the broad spectrum of symptoms linked to respiratory infections.

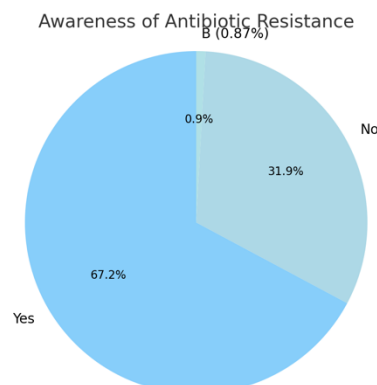
9. Antibiotic Usage and Self-Medication:



The survey's alarming finding is that, even though many respiratory illnesses are viral in origin, antibiotics are frequently used to treat them. Antibiotic resistance may result from the startling 67% of students who reported using medications for a mild cold. With the most

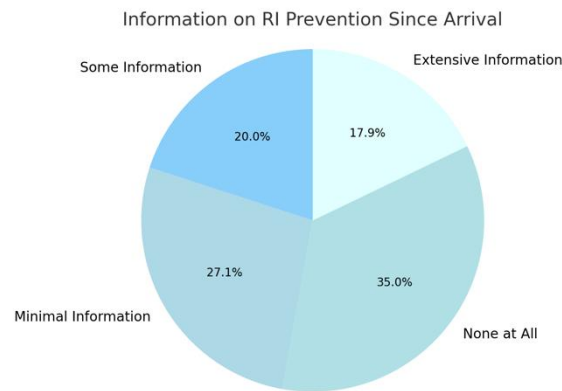
often used medications being amoxicillin, azithromycin, and paracetamol.

10. Awareness of Antibiotic Resistance:



Encouragingly, 67% of respondents were aware of the concept of antibiotic resistance, although this did not necessarily translate into responsible antibiotic use. The survey found that the availability of antibiotics

without prescriptions and improper dosages were significant contributors to antibiotic misuse. This highlights the need for stronger regulatory policies to prevent the overuse and misuse of antibiotics.



11. Information on RI Prevention:

Despite the high rates of RI among students, many reported receiving little to no information about prevention strategies. Only 20% of respondents received extensive information, while 35% had not received any guidance at all. This suggests a gap in the dissemination of critical health information that could help reduce the incidence of respiratory infections.

Discussion:

The findings of this survey provide a troubling picture of how university students interact with and handle respiratory diseases. Many students do not consistently adhere to preventive measures like wearing masks and washing their hands, even though some show understanding of the significance of hygiene and antibiotic resistance.

Despite the high incidence of respiratory illnesses, the low mask usage rates point to a potential complacency or lack of understanding of how infections spread.

Perhaps the most concerning result is the extensive usage of antibiotics for primarily viral diseases. Despite being aware of antibiotic resistance, many students still abuse antibiotics, probably because of the ease of obtaining them without a prescription. This is indicative of a larger problem in the healthcare system, as the rising threat of antibiotic resistance is exacerbated by self-medication and pharmaceutical abuse.

The report also identifies a knowledge gap on the prevention of respiratory infections. Students might not be aware of effective ways to stop the spread of illnesses if health authorities or universities fail to provide sufficient guidance, which might lead to greater infection rates and more antibiotic abuse.

Conclusion:

This survey has revealed critical insights into the behaviors, perceptions, and knowledge of university students regarding respiratory infections and their prevention. Despite widespread knowledge of the importance of maintaining good cleanliness and the risks posed by antibiotic resistance, actual practices do not always align with suggested standards. Stronger public health initiatives are obviously needed, such as increased awareness of the value of hand hygiene, regular mask use, and prudent antibiotic use. Universities ought to take a more proactive approach to ensuring that students have access to the right medical treatment and to spreading knowledge about infection prevention.

In order to lower the prevalence of respiratory illnesses and stop the spread of antibiotic resistance, it will be essential to close these gaps through focused health campaigns, stronger laws governing the sale of antibiotics, and better campus cleaning initiatives.

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