Introduction

Adolescents are commonly considered to be a population group which is prone to drug misuse and abuse. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2014), the most frequently abused medicines among teens are amphetamines, prescription painkillers, cough medicines, sedatives, and tranquillizers. The most prevalent reasons for drug misuse in adolescents are stress, fatigue, boredom, curiosity, increasing their reputation, or simply to feel good or, at least, better (Butorac et al., 2011).

Materials and methods

An original questionnaire was designed for research purposes, with open-ended and closed-ended questions. Participants were informed with the purpose of the research and their rights regarding the research. The survey was conducted online, via the Google forms platform.

Results and discussion

A total of 444 participants were included in the study, of which 122 (27.5%) were males and 322 (72.5%) were females. The participants were divided into two subgroups: elementary and high school students; and university students. Out of 444 participants, 202 (45.9%) were elementary and high school students, while 242 (54.5%) of participants were university students.

The prevalence of benzodiazepine use was 7.1%, which is a bit higher than the European average of 5.6% reported by Perlmutter et al. (2018). Among students in Zadar, the most commonly used drugs were non-opioid analgesics and antihistamines, but also antidepressants, which was not the case with adolescents in Sarajevo (Butorac et al., 2011).

Out of 399 participants who have stated which drugs they have been using, 81 (23.0%) participants used the same generic drugs under different brand names. The most frequent of these was paracetamol, and some participants used 4-5 different medicines, all of which contained paracetamol. Lee et al. (2017) stated that the participants within their study had the lowest confidence in answering healthcare providers whether the medication they were using contained paracetamol.

Most commonly used drugs

1. Non-opioid analgesics
2. Antibiotics
3. Dietary supplements
4. Antihistamines
5. Benzodiazepines

23.0% of the participants used the same generic drugs under different brand names.

Conclusion

The adolescents incorporated in this study were under severe risks of drug side effects, drug-drug interactions, drug-alcohol interactions, developing tolerance and addiction, overdose, and even death, due to their reckless, uncontrolled and excessive misuse and abuse of drugs. Nevertheless, if taken into consideration that 85% of adolescents expect the medical professionals to be the main source of drug information, data was obtained and analyzed from 444 questionnaires that met the inclusion criteria. Statistical analysis was done using the methods of descriptive and inferential statistics, using Microsoft Excel 2010 and IBM SPSS Ver. 23.0, computer programs.

References