

*Correspondence***Self-medication in older adults: An important yet challenging issue**Reza Abdollahi ^{a*} 

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Email: rezaabdollahi97@yahoo.com<https://doi.org/10.32598/JNRCP.2404.1063>This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) (CC BY-NC 4.0).

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To the Editor

The elderly stage is a vulnerable phase in the human lifespan, wherein individuals face potential risks such as a higher prevalence of chronic illnesses, feelings of loneliness and isolation, and a lack of social assistance. Moreover, due to physical and mental limitations, their personal autonomy is often jeopardized in various circumstances [1]. Older adults may independently take medications due to existing physical and mental health conditions. Self-medication is a significant aspect of self-care practices and a key topic in healthcare discussions [2]. Self-medication is a behavior in which a person tries to fix his illness or health problem without the help and opinion of professionals. Self-medication can be done by consuming an industrial or handmade drug, obtaining drugs without a specialist's prescription, using prescribed drugs in similar cases, dividing prescribed drugs for a person among family members and acquaintances, using additional and remaining drugs at home, refraining from taking the original prescribed medicine, whether it is done by taking extra medicine without a doctor's prescription or not taking the medicine completely [3]. Currently, self-treatment is one of the major problems in the disease treatment cycle. This has caused bacterial resistance, lack of optimal treatment, unwanted poisoning, unwanted side effects and complications, disruption in the pharmaceutical market, waste of cost, and an increase in the per capita cost of medicine in society [4]. Evidence shows that aging can specifically change the pharmacokinetic process of drugs, such as changes in absorption, metabolism, release, protein binding, and liver and kidney clearance, as well as the pharmacodynamic process of drugs, including changes in the drug's action on the

target tissue. These changes lead older adults to unwanted drug side effects [5, 6]. Due to the increase in life expectancy, the probability of chronic diseases in older adults also increases, therefore, old age is a period in which the need for health care, including drug therapy, increases [7]. Today, easy access to over-the-counter or prescription drugs has led older adults to take more drugs compared to the past [8]. These people are more exposed to the risk of incorrect drug use and complications due to their mental state, neglect, and social isolation [9].

In sum, self-medication is a challenging and complicated approach for older adults, which can have serious and dangerous consequences in personal, social, and economic dimensions. Therefore, it is suggested to use educational programs that are suitable for the learning characteristics of older adults and to provide information through the media. In addition, to prevent self-medication and not arbitrarily take drugs, pharmacy monitoring programs should be implemented to prevent the sale of prescription drugs to reduce the unwanted consequences of self-medication in older adults.

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Authors' contributions

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Using artificial intelligent chatbots

None.

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