

Customer's Awareness and Views on Online Pharmacies During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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COVID-19 pandemic decreases accessibility of medicines due to self-quarantine and other safety protocols. Online pharmacy emerged as a popular way to purchase medication amidst serious public health concerns. The study aims to identify the respondents' awareness and views on online pharmacies during the COVID-19 pandemic. A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative -nonexperimental research design was utilized using simple random sampling of 439 respondents via an online survey in Davao City, Philippines. Results revealed that most of the respondents were female (65.60%), within 18-29 years old (88.16%) and having average monthly income of less than \$940.00 (59%). Majority of the respondents were aware (66.51%) of online pharmacy in Davao City (44.19%) but few utilized (11.84%) on purchasing medications online. The results showed that despite the growing concern on its safety and the lack of awareness in most respondents, there was a positive response on the acceptance(87%), practicability(83%), and perceived advantages(93.5%) of online pharmacy during the pandemic. The statistical analysis revealed that there were significant relationships ($p < 0.05$) between the age ($p = 0.002$) and income ($p = 0.021$) of the respondents with online pharmacy awareness. Furthermore, the respondents' monthly family income also significantly influenced their views on the acceptability ($p = 0.004$) and safety ($p = 0.013$) of online pharmacies. However, as online pharmacies are not yet extensively utilized in Davao City, the current findings certainly proved that online pharmacies, if established are acceptable and a feasible alternative to the public that needed extensive regulations to safeguard the sale and use of medications during the pandemic.

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