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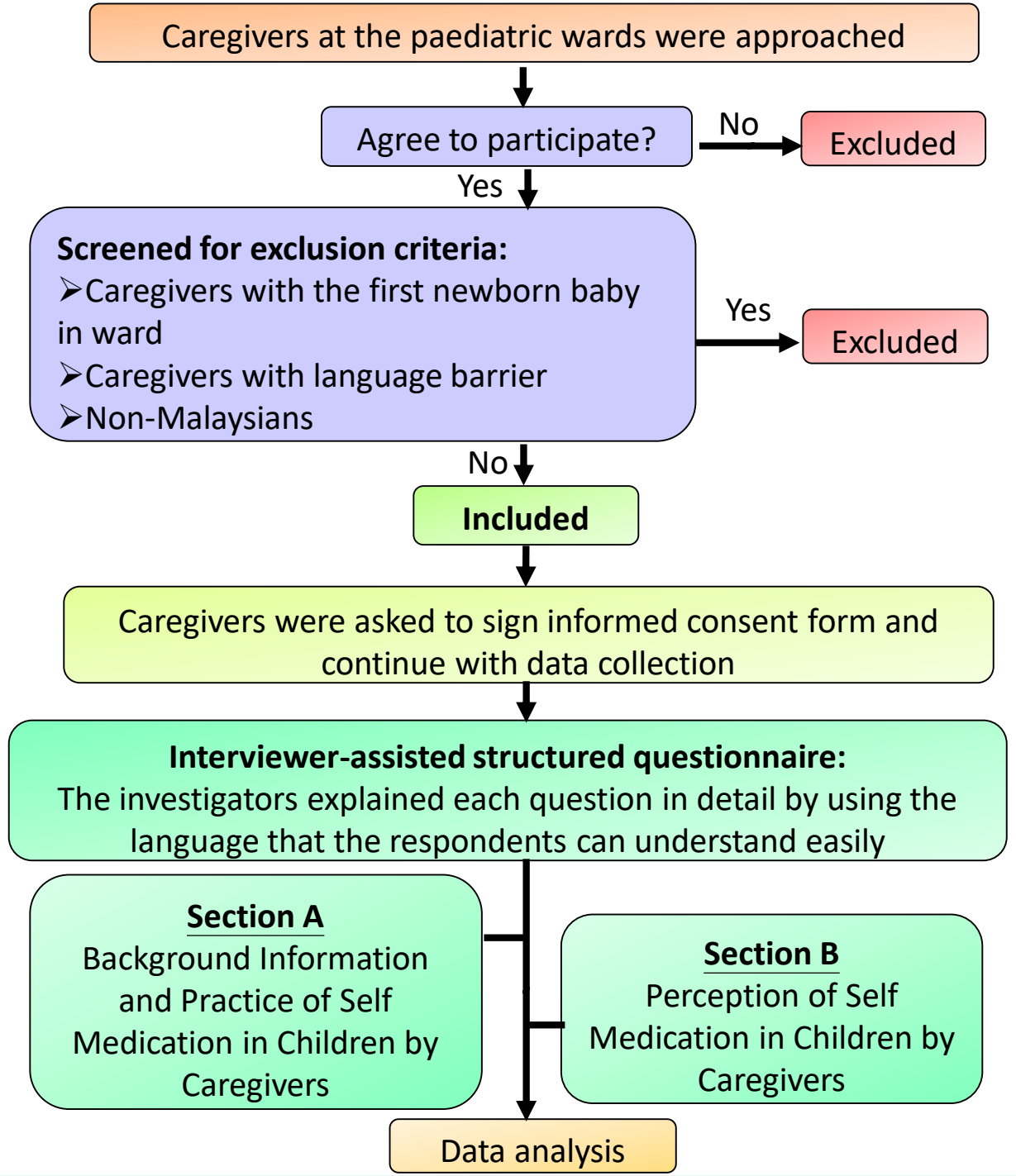
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Introduction

- The World Health Organization has defined **self-medication** as “the use of medicinal products by the consumer to treat self-recognized disorders or symptoms, or the intermittent or continued use of a medication prescribed by a physician for chronic or recurring diseases or symptoms”.
- Self medication in children by caregivers is a common practice globally.¹⁻⁴ However, medical complications secondary to self medications is a cause of concern.
- The study aimed to explore the **practice and perception of self medication among children by their caregivers in Sibu Hospital**.

Materials and Methods

Study population	Study design	Sample size
Caregivers of children admitted to Paediatric Wards in Sibu Hospital (July 2020 - Jan 2021)	A cross-sectional survey	328 respondents



Result

Figure 1: Percentage of caregivers practiced self-medication in children (n= 230)

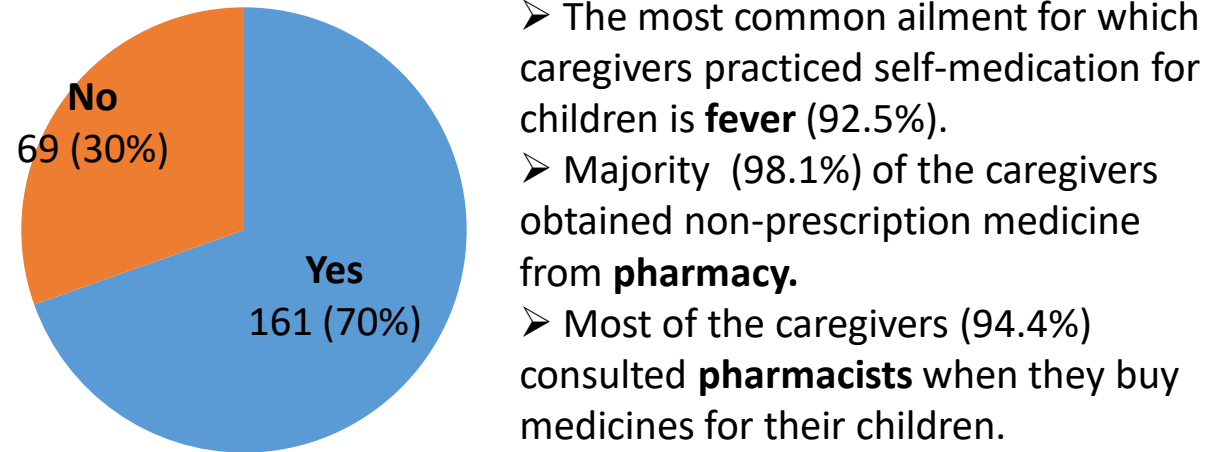


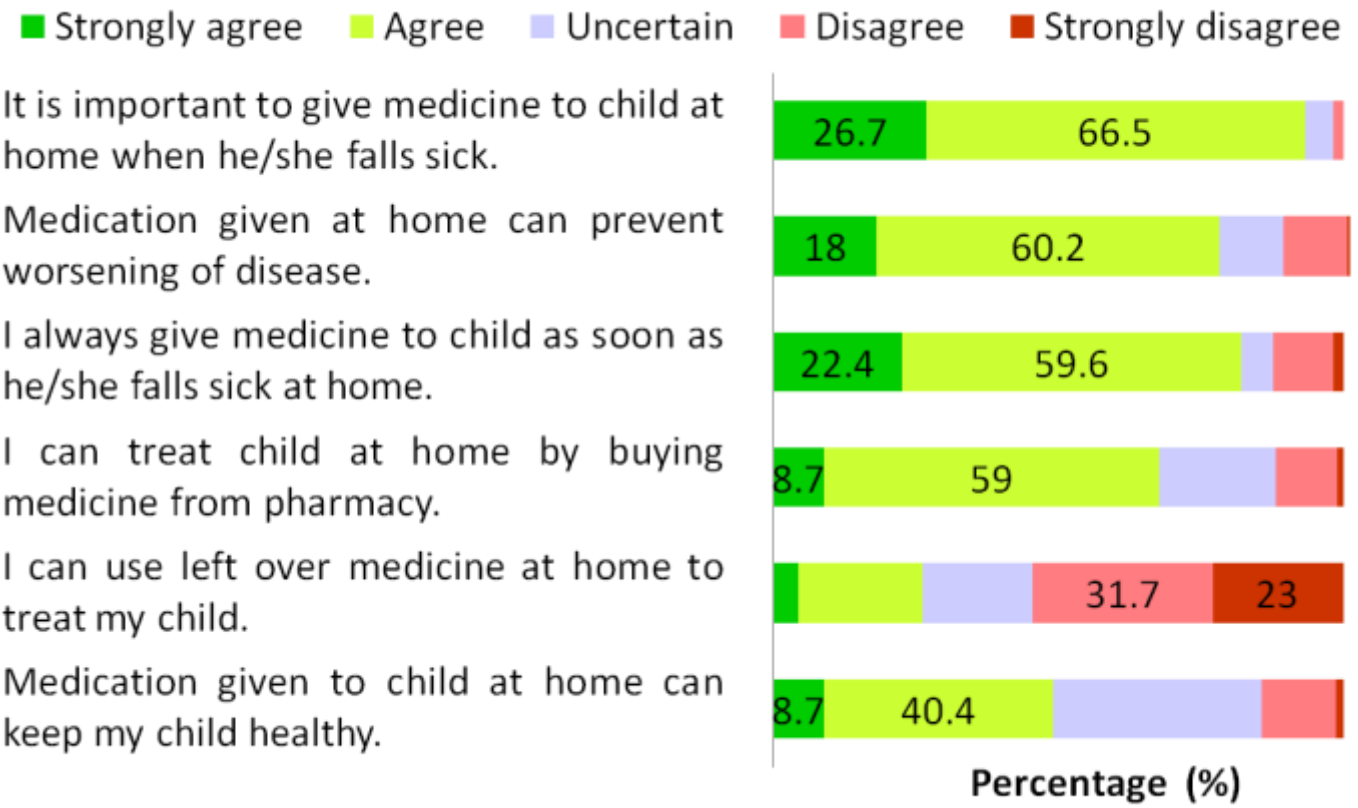
Table 1: Association between Self Medication in Children and Sociodemographic Factors of Caregivers

Variable	Self-medicated n (%)	Did not self-medicated n (%)	X ² statistic ^a (df)	P value
Gender of caregiver				
Male	12 (54.5)	10 (45.5)	2.77 (1)	0.140
Female	149 (71.6)	59 (28.4)		
Race				
Malay	32 (78.0)	9 (22.0)	1.67 (3)	0.646
Chinese	23 (65.7)	12 (34.3)		
Iban	86 (68.8)	39 (31.2)		
Others	20 (69.0)	9 (31.0)		
Occupation				
Employed/ Retired	53 (72.6)	20 (27.4)	0.35 (1)	0.643
Unemployed	108 (68.8)	49 (31.2)		
Educational level				
Primary school/ below	31 (63.3)	18 (36.7)	1.43 (3)	0.711
Secondary school	97 (72.4)	37 (27.6)		
Pre-U / Diploma	21 (70.9)	9 (30.0)		
University	12 (70.6)	5 (29.4)		
Family monthly income				
RM5001 and above	6 (54.5)	5 (45.5)	4.20 (3)	0.240
RM3001 - RM5000	22 (68.8)	10 (31.2)		
RM1001 - RM3000	82 (75.9)	26 (24.1)		
RM1000 and below	51 (64.6)	28 (35.4)		
Number of children				
1	23 (52.3)	21 (47.7)	9.71 (4)	*0.044
2	52 (69.3)	23 (30.7)		
3	42 (76.4)	13 (23.6)		
4	27 (77.1)	8 (22.9)		
5 and above	17 (81.0)	4 (19.0)		

^aChi-square test

*P value significant at <0.05

Figure 2: Caregivers’ Perception of Self Medication in Children (n = 161)



- Most of the caregivers **agreed that it is important to give medicine to a child at home when he/she falls sick** (93.2%).
- Majority agreed that **they could treat child at home by buying medicine from pharmacy** (67.7%).
- However, more than half of the caregivers **disagreed to use leftover medicine** at home to treat their child (54.7%).

Discussion/ Conclusion

- Figure 1** illustrated the **high prevalence (70%) of caregivers practiced self medication** for their children. Different countries/ communities recorded different prevalence of self medication in children, which could be caused by difference in sociodemographic backgrounds, healthcare service, ease of access to over the counter medications, parental knowledge and perception about self medication for children.¹⁻⁴
- Table 1** showed **caregivers with more children tend to self medicate their children (p value = 0.044)** as caregivers with more children (more than 1) were **more experienced** in taking care of the children including management of their children’s ailments and medicine.^{1,5,6}
- Most of the caregivers agreed to self medicate their children when their children are sick (**Table 2**). However, some respondents mentioned that it **only applicable with some minor illnesses** such as fever or flu. This was in accordance with the finding of other studies.^{1,7}
- Limitation:** The results of our study may be limited by inadequate sample size and unequal distribution of participants based on their demographics.
- This study highlighted the high prevalence of self-medication in children by caregiver in Sibu Hospital. Hence, pharmacists play an important role in providing information and advice to caregivers in the self-medication practice, including conditions that could be treated by self-medication.

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