

**A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EASE OF ACCESSIBILITY  
OF NARCOTIC AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES  
WITHOUT PRESCRIPTION:  
A CASE OF THIKA MUNICIPALITY PHARMACY OUTLETS**

**A research project submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the  
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## ABSTRACT

Narcotic and psychotropic substances are highly addictive substances and therefore if they are not well controlled can lead to health afflictions. Dispensing of these substances without a prescription from pharmacy outlets is a big threat, because they can be inappropriately used leading serious health problems. Many people do not treat various substances as the source of serious health afflictions. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the general public accesses the controlled drugs and whether the guidelines regarding the sale of narcotic and psychotropic substances are safeguarded. The study may provide the relevant information to the concerned institutions like health facilities and the government on the level of awareness about narcotic and psychotropic substances. The collection of data involved administration of questionnaires to the local residents as well as survey by sending two students to buy drugs without a prescription in pharmacies within Thika municipality, in the month of August 2014. The study targeted pharmacies in Thika town and local residents. The targeted population comprised of local residents. The data collected in this study was entered, edited and analyzed by use of descriptive statistics. In presenting the study's findings, frequency tables and charts with varying percentages was used. The study found that 55% of the population are aware of dihydrocodein while 45% are not aware of the substance. 105 (42%) reported obtaining the drug (Codeine) with a prescription from a chemist, 50(20%) noted they got the drugs from a chemist without a prescription, 55(22%) obtained from hospital. It was also found that 58% of the respondents are aware of Diazepam while 42% are not aware. Majority 162(65%) agreed having knowledge on Benzhexol while 88(35%) declined.

In conclusion the sale of the controlled drugs without prescription is extremely high. The results confirm a trend of an irrational use of narcotic and psychotropic medications. They also reveal several inappropriate practices which involve the prescription and dispensation of these drugs.

The study recommended (among other issues) the need for government to implement clear policies that guide on the use of narcotic and psychotropic substances; by ensuring that prescription of drugs is given priority through monitoring and organizing of short time seminars and workshops for pharmacist.