

Introduction:

The aim of this study was to highlight the use of acetazolamide, amongst travellers at high altitude, in a safe manor in order to prevent high altitude sickness. This study also looked at factors that affect acute mountain sickness (AMS) prophylaxis usage.

Method:

The qualitative part of the study involved the use of 20 one-to-one, in-depth interviews which were analysed using thematic analysis. The quantitative part of the study involved 50 guides and 300 trekkers who undertook a questionnaire at high altitude, which was analysed using descriptive statistics.

Results:

The results revealed that the knowledge of prophylactic medication was low amongst guides. 25% of the trekkers used acetazolamide, 3.3% of which took a daily dose of 250mg 1-2 days before going into high altitude. The main reason discovered for lack of usage from guides and trekkers was poor knowledge. The little knowledge they did have was gained from guide books and healthcare professionals.



Take Home Message:

In order to improve the prophylaxis uptake / usage amongst trekkers, and reduce morbidity and mortality levels, correct education needs to be delivered prior to high altitude travelling.

Reference:

Kilner, T. and Mukerji, S., 2010. Acute mountain sickness prophylaxis: knowledge, attitudes, & behaviours in the Everest region of Nepal. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*, 8(6), pp.395-400