

Patients Choices of Generic and Branded Medicines: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of this paper is to examine and review patient's choices related to the generic and branded medicines. Accordingly, the perspective of patients and medicine consumers of the market is an essential factor to understand the use and usage of familiar drug treatments. Nowadays, people are also getting more health-conscious to lead a safe life and hazard-free lives in our modern society. Generic drugs help to provide the patients with similar medical treatments which are as effective as branded medicines but are less expensive as compared to them. But, after recording some reviews from different patients the people all across the world also increasingly face difficulties while choosing, branded and generic medicines. Therefore, this research work is designed and leads us to determine their perceived benefits. In addition, patient's choices were also seen to get influenced because of their source of income. The global availability of powerful, safe and cheap prescription drugs is a key challenge for the global public health system. Many experts and professionals also continue to believe that both medicines are bio-equivalent and such drugs are equally viable alternatives for effective drug treatment as assumed in this research work. This study makes a comparison of the generic and branded medicines among different patients who consume such medicines (86 from each category).

Keywords: Generic medicines, Branded medicines, Prescription, Medical Treatment, Consumers.

INTRODUCTION

Generic drugs are such drugs which are the copy of branded drugs whose patent has been expired and branded medicines are such drugs that are being developed by pharmaceutical company (Panattoni, 2011). Doctors of the medical field generally, do not prescribe generic medicines as they are very much doubtful about the quality and safety of such drugs. Generic medicines are basically a duplicate of branded drugs and pharmacists of medical industry earn minimum rates of profit on sale of such drugs as compared to the branded ones (Jakovljevic, et.al, 2014). The price of prescribed drugs has increased rapidly within the few years, and many patients are looking for alternatives as well as many pharmacy retailers are also seeking various approach in their prize minimisation by using and adopting typical fill charge. Generic medicines are such kinds of drugs which are made and allotted without a patent. Even generic medicines are not inferior related to any type of branded medicines, and they are as powerful as branded medicinal drugs. The generic medicines are also supposed to go through all strict procedures of exceptional requirements to meet the standards before they are brought into the markets.

Though, the branded medicines are the original products that are developed by pharmaceutical company. Branded medicine is provided with sole right to get manufactured and distributed across the market for a period of time (Alam et al., 2017, Dunne, et.al, 2013). Doctors do not prescribe to their patients with any kind of generic medicines because they are not safe and not as effective as branded medicines. The non-patented drugs face the same regulatory direction manner as compared to the patented drugs and such medicines also contain the same kind of active pharmaceutical

ingredient (API), but they may also contain numerous kinds of inactive components like fillers, colorations and so on. But, during the last few decades, advancements done in the healthcare sector and expenses related to medical treatments are at rise letting the patients shift towards consumption of generic medicines. Intake of generic medicine is being diagnosed to be a huge aspect, because of the increase in the costs of medical services (Alam et al., 2019).

Usually the branded medicines are always costly as compared to branded drugs. Such drugs are often sold in pharmaceutical stores with a non-propriety name or else branded name. In the recent years, compared to last few decades the pharmaceutical industry has become a giant in comparison to any other industries. Many data also suggested that the pharmacy industry has increased from 1,500 crores in 1980 to 1, 119,000 crores in 2012. Still, a large population of many countries are facing problems to afford branded medicines. Therefore, despite considerable growth observed in many countries the patients are still facing difficulties towards the availability and affordability of generic and branded medicines by the healthcare providers (Kaplan, et.al, 2012). Several countries across the world have become capable enough, to produce both branded and generic medicines. Branded medicines are usually manufactured by multinational drug companies (Mackey & Liang, 2011). Appreciably, generic medicines can deal with several health issues very effectively and their substantial use provides a possibility to significantly reduce expenditures regarding the health care budgets of a patient. Generic remedies make treatment, affordable for a larger section in our society. There are many evidence and positive belief infused among the patients about non-branded medicines, if they are being recommended to any of patients by a physician or a pharmacist. With this background, the present study is planned with the aim to understand patient's choice towards both generic and branded drugs. However, instead of type of drug the health depends upon the adherence of the medication (Alam et al., 2018).

LITERATURE OF REVIEW

During the last few decades, the price of prescribed drugs has multiplied considerably and many pharmacy outlets all over the world are searching out different means for price minimization through adopting generic fill rate (Gebicki, et.al, 2014). Generic medicines can be defined as medicines which are being made and distributed without a patent. Such medicines are considered as a tool across the world to enhance and provide drug treatments amongst all sections especially the poor populace. Many patients also perceived that generic medicines are as powerful as authentic medicines. In comparison to branded medicines, the generic drugs are inexpensive; with this the patients were able to save a significant amount of price every month (Cameron, et.al, 2012). The major difference between among both generic and branded medicine is simply the name. Branded medicines are offered and brought into market with a logo name and other is sold with a general name. Even their dosage, active ingredients, and side effects are almost like branded drugs. Pharmaceutical companies develop and discover new kinds of drugs after they consider extensive type of research and testing. Such medicines which are often, developed through such type of testing are branded drugs. Similarly, generic medicines are created exactly with the same kinds of active ingredients that have undergone all kinds of testing and clinical trials during its patent when

they were manufactured by a brand. Patients are also considering such medicines to be safe and effective towards any kind of health issues.

These medicines ensure their consumers that they are getting effective and safe medicine. Generic medicines are available across all countries, and they are available to all of them in their nearby pharmacy stores. Generic drugs work in the same way as the branded drugs as they are composed of same dosage form, safety, identical dosage shape, strength, route of administration, exceptional and with performance characteristics (Varu & Khanna, 2010). The expiration dates of generic drugs have an extended expiration date than the branded medicines. The manufacturers or makers of such medicines do not invest money on its development, research, clinical trials, and marketing as well as in advertising (Alam et al., 2019). But they ensure consumers to provide them with safe medications by investigating the problem reports and thus, make recommendations to all medical representatives, manufacturers, healthcare professionals and to their patients. Patients are also availed these alternatives, in many different online pharmacies like PharmEasy, Netmeds, Tata1mg, MedplusMart and Amazon. The healthcare prices are growing hastily, and governments of numerous countries are adopting cost containment measures to make certain efficient utilisation of scarce resources. Many doctors also, consider that the usual medicines aren't as powerful and safe as the branded medicines.

In USA, the patients are prescribed and filled with most of the generic medications, whereas the branded medicines account for almost 74 percent. Generic drugs save billions of dollars in countries like USA. According to some of the reports, non-branded medicines saved almost \$254 billion during the year 2017 and over \$ 1.1 trillion in the past decade. Cost remains one of the main reasons between generic and branded medicines that make generic a better choice amongst patients (Fraeyman, et.al, 2015). Branded medications are costly because they are made of newly developed and undergo various forms of animal as well as clinical trials to prove that they are effective and safe while consumed by patients. Therefore, such trails and research work take a lot of money to get patented and exclusivity safety from competition for numerous years. The manufacturers after spending huge amount of money during its process set any price for such medicines to gain profit from their new discovery. Pharmacists provide the patient with all kinds of information about generic and branded medicines so, that they must be taken carefully.

In some of the rare cases, patient might get a reaction after taking generic medicine due to the presence of some inactive ingredients like-fillers, colours, flavours, coatings, and preservatives. The consumers of branded medicines often experience modest changes, when they shift towards generic medicines (Berndt & Aitken, 2011). The government of India has launched Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJY) to create awareness among the patients regarding generic medicines. There are almost 13000, reliable generic drugs available in the market for patients at a very budget-friendly price. PMBJY procures medicines for every citizen of India from World Health Organisation-Good Manufacturing Practices (WHO-GMP), Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and from numerous certified suppliers for ensuring the quality of manufactured drugs which are to be introduced in the market. They, thoroughly check the ingredients present in them and understand doctor's perception about generic medicines so, that it

may help them to recognize possible barriers towards the usage of greater non-branded medicines. The generic medicines are being brought into market are closely monitored by The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation to ensure the safety of the patients. Major advantage with respect to generic medicine is that these medicines are usually covered by insurance companies due to its inexpensive prices. Most of the insurance companies cover all the generic medicines costs and many patients will not be able to pay any type of medicinal costs from their own pocket. Due to different perceptions and past experiences regarding the consumption of generic medicines, some patients continue to rely on branded medicines despite the difference in cost (Alrasheedy, et.al, 2014). Still, most of them are not aware of generic medicines and government rules towards prescribing non-branded medicines. Although, many of them also believed and experienced that generic drugs are as effective as branded medicines but, many patients also mentioned that they experienced differences in the quality of both, the generic medicine and branded medicines (Olsson & Källemark, 2012). Physicians and medicinal practitioners often, prescribed them with branded medicines by their branded names resulting, in those drugs being widely prescribed even while the less costly bio-equivalent generic medicines are available in market. In many countries, the exercise of generic substitution is being strongly promoted via health authorities in many countries along with Australia. Therefore, the usage of generic medicines is steadily growing across all sections of society because of economic stress on drug budgets.

Objective

- To analyse the factors determining the patient's choice for consuming generic and branded medicines

Methodology

This study makes a comparison between the generic and the branded medicines with a motive for choice with 172 generic and branded medicines consumers or patients (86 from each category). The respondents were selected based on judgmental sampling. Data were collected on "five-point Likert Scale". Statistical technique – mean was used to find the magnitude of their responses.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1 Factors Determining the Patient's Choice for Consuming Generic and Branded Medicines

SL. No.	Motivation	Mean Value	
		Generic medicines consumers (N=86)	Branded medicines consumers (N=86)
1	Quality and safety of drugs	4.02	4.12
2	Cost effective	4.25	3.86
3	Expiry date of medicine	4.18	3.97
4	Awareness of the medicine	3.45	4.44
5	Effectiveness of the drug	4.12	4.02

6	Side effects of the drug	4.08	4.00
7	Packaging of the medicines	3.82	4.32
8	Availability of the medicines	3.67	4.24

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the factors determining the patient's choice for consuming generic and branded medicines. The study was conducted for two categories – generic medicine consumers and branded medicine consumers. It was found that the most important motivations for generic medicine consumers are cost effectiveness (4.25), expiry date of medicine (4.18), Effectiveness of the drug (4.12) and Side effects of the drug (4.08). However, the most important reasons for choosing branded medicine are awareness of the medicine (4.44), packaging of the medicines (4.32), availability of the medicines (4.24) and Quality and safety of drugs (4.12).

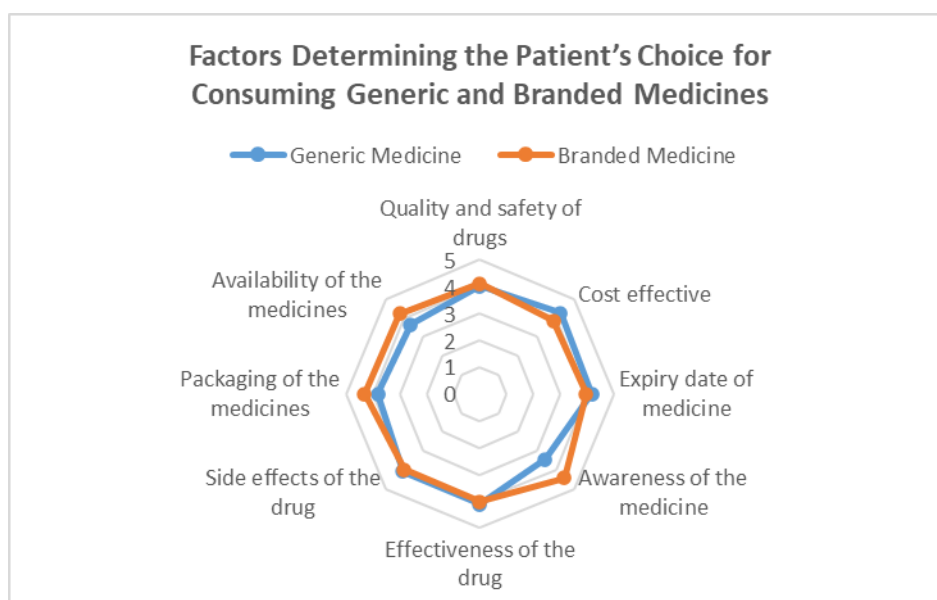


Figure 1 Factors Determining the Patient's Choice for Consuming Generic and Branded Medicines

CONCLUSION

After, considering several efforts by taking the aid of government corporations towards promoting the generic medicines, the patient's choice towards general medicines isn't always preferred much by the means of the purchasers. False impression and less understanding amongst patients about generic medicines treatments can also be one of the elements contributing towards this scenario (Brown, et.al, 2016). Patients believed that generic medicines would ensure to provide them with a better option of treatment at a very low-priced. It's far, more consequently, vital to make an affected person aware and demystify about their bad perspectives related to generic drugs. In many developing nations, more than 75% of medication expenditure is out of pocket (Bilal, et.al, 2015). As, the cost of healthcare is increasing day-by-day people choices are shifting more towards generic medicines across the world irrespective of poor or rich country. Governments in many nations are

developing and bringing stores which have legal authorities to sell generic medicines which are most effective (Oortwijn, 2010). There are numerous results, which still show that medicines consumers who lack adequate knowledge still tend to prefer original branded medicines over generic medicines. Hence, as a result, health care professionals need to play an active role by educating patients and recommend them with generic drugs to their sufferers.

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