



## CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING IN MEDICINE PURCHASES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PRESCRIPTION AND OTC MEDICATIONS

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### Abstract:

Consumer pharmaceutical buying behavior of prescribed and OTC medications are influenced by corporation image, advertisement etc. These may cause lot of adverse effects on health of the consumer. The investigator has conducted the study on "Consumer pharmaceutical buying behavior: Prescribed and OTC medications. **Objectives:** To determine the factors Influencing the Purchase Decision of prescribed and OTC medications 2.To analyze the factors adopted by the consumers to purchase OTC Medications. **Methods:** A quantitative research approach of descriptive research design was used .By using simple random sampling technique a total of 60 samples were recruited and data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics **.Results:** Factors Influencing the Purchase Decision of prescribed and OTC medications, unveiled the significant difference in factors influencing consumers' purchase decision of the medications at level  $p < 0.05$ . Analysis of Influence of Advertisement Posters on Purchase Decision of Medications in Pharmacy and first intension to visit pharmacy to purchase prescribed medicines or OTC medicines disclosed the significant difference at level  $p < 0.05$  . Factor Analysis on OTC Medicines Adopted by the Consumers disclosed that use of OTC medicine is high risk and may lead to adverse effects. **Conclusion:** OTC medicines can lead to serious health problems like addiction on prolonged use and organ damage.

**Key words:** Consumer buying Behavior, prescribed medicine & OTC medications.

### Introduction

Currently consumer pharmaceutical buying behavior is influenced by many factors which determine the choice of buying prescribed or non prescribed medications (Over the counter



medications).The factors include , reliability, awareness, corporate image, and promotion .Many patients buy OTC medications for common problems like pain,allergy ,cold etc at an affordable price which are easily accessible for everyone .It may cause lot of adverse effects ,drug to drug interactions, food drug interactions and allergic reactions. The risk of untoward events are very high with OTC medications whereas prescribed medications are safe to use. .Hence it is very important to describe the consumer buying behavior of prescribed and OTC medications with an interest of the welfare of the society.

### Objectives:

1. To determine the factors Influencing the Purchase Decision of prescribed and OTC medications
2. To analyze the factors adopted by the consumers to purchase OTC Medications

### Research Methodology

A quantitative research approach of descriptive design was adopted to conduct the study .The data was collected via structured questionnaire from 60 consumers (Patients) of medications using random sampling technique and information was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

### Statistical Techniques

The data and information collected were analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 20.

### Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. **Table-1. Distribution of Factors Influencing the Purchase Decision of prescribed and OTC medications (N=60)**

Influencer	Frequency	Percentage	R Value	P value
Previous prescription	45	75.00	0.07*	0.03 SS
Friends suggestions	04	6.67		
Media Advertisement influence	03	5.00		
Trail Base	03	5.00		
Self-Medication	02	3.33		
Pharmacy	03	5.00		



<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>		
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**\*p<0.05**

The table 1 indicates that about 75 % consumers' purchase decision of the medications is influenced by previous prescription from a doctor followed by friends suggestions (6.67 per cent), media advertisement influenced, trail base and pharmacy (5.00 percent) and self (3.33 per cent). The R value of 0.07 is significant at level  $p<0.05$  indicating that there is a significant difference in factors influencing consumers' purchase decision of the medications.

**Table- 2. Influence of Advertisement Posters on Purchase Decision of Medications in Pharmacy (N=60)**

<b>Influence of Display</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>R Value</b>	<b>P value</b>
Very often	03	5.00	0.05*	0.03 SS
All times	04	6.70		
Occasionally	09	15.00		
Not influenced	44	73.30		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>		

**\*p<0.05**

It is observed that about 73.33 % of consumers are not influenced by advertisement posters followed by occasionally (15.00 per cent), all times (6.70 per cent) and very often (5.00 per cent). The R value of 0.05 is significant at level  $p<0.05$  which depicts that there is a significant difference among influence of advertising posters on purchase decision of medications by the consumers in Pharmacy

**Table-3. First Intention to Visit Pharmacy to Purchase Prescribed Medicine (or) OTC Medicines (N=60)**

<b>First Intention to Purchase Prescribed Medicine or OTC Medicines</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>R Value</b>	<b>P value</b>
Prescribed Medicines	46	76.70	0.02*	0.03 SS
OTC Medicines	14	23.30		
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.00</b>		

**\*p<0.05**



Table 3 illustrates that about 76.60 % of consumers' first intention to visit pharmacy to purchase only prescribed medicines, while the rest of 23.30 per cent consumers' first intention to visit pharmacy to purchase OTC (Over the Counter) medicines. The R value of 0.02 is significant at level  $p < 0.05$  which denotes that there is a significant difference in consumers' first intension to visit pharmacy to purchase prescribed medicines.

**Table 4. OTC Medicines Adopted by the Consumers-Factor Analysis (N=60)**

OTC Practices	Rotated Factor Loadings on			
	Factor I	Factor II	Factor III	Factor IV
I reach for prescribed medicines at the first illness	-0.621			
I use prescribed medicines only if the illness is quite severe				0.838
OTC medicines are safe to use		0.564		
OTC medicines have adverse effects			0.801	
The effect of inappropriate use of OTC medicines can be as serious than that of prescription medicines			0.805	
OTC medicines can lead to serious health problems	-0.675			
Some OTC medicines impede with the natural healing process of the body		-0.565		
With continual use, some OTC medicines lose their effectiveness	0.559			
OTC medicines cause dependency or addiction on prolonged use	0.627			
OTC medicines should be used frequently to relieve minor health problems				-0.548
Eigen Value	2.39	1.46	1.20	1.06
% of Variance	17.81	15.86	14.94	13.69
Cumulative % of Variance	17.81	33.67	48.61	62.30



It is inferred from the table 4 that out of 16 satisfaction variables three variables have their high, relatively tightly grouped factor loadings on factor-I.

It includes

- I reach for prescribed medicines at the first illness (-0.62)
- OTC medicines can lead to serious health problems (-0.68)
- OTC medicines cause dependency or addiction on prolonged use (0.63)

Hence, those factors are considered as **“RISK”**.

Factor-II: is formed with:

- OTC medicines are safe to use (0.56)
- Some OTC medicines impede with the natural healing process of the body (-0.56)

Those variables are considered as **“SAFE”**.

Factor-III: This factor includes:

- OTC medicines have adverse effects (0.80)
- The effect of inappropriate use of OTC medicines can be as serious than that of prescription medicines (0.81)

Those variables are termed as **“SIDE EFFECTS”**.

Factor-IV: This factor is formed with:

- I use prescribed medicines only if the illness is quite severe (0.84)
- OTC medicines should be used frequently to relieve minor health problems (-0.55)

Hence, these factors are termed as **“FREQUENT”**.

### **Findings based Suggestions**

- Some of the consumers always stock the common medicine at home. The consumers stock the vitamins, herbal remedies, laxatives, and anti-diarrhea and hemorrhoid products when consumers suffer from minor illness.
- Few customers stock medicated skin care products, cough remedies and sore throat in sometimes and they never keep other medicines in their homes.
- OTC medicines may be used frequently to relieve minor health issues, but it causes unpleasant effects like asthma, breathing difficulty and epilepsy.
- The effect of inappropriate use of OTC medicines can be as serious than that of prescription medicines



- OTC medicines can lead to serious health problems. It may be cause addiction on prolonged use . If OTC medications are taken more the kidneys could be damaged with OTC medicines such as NSAIDs.

### **Conclusion**

The results unveil that about 60% of consumers don't use the medications without advised by the doctors.

Further it indicates that 75% consumers' purchase decision of the medications are influenced by previous prescription from a doctor. The results show that about 60% of consumers feel that the medications are safe to use and it is observed that about 73.33 per cent of consumers are never influenced by advertisement posters in Pharmacy.

The results denote that about 76% of consumers' first intention to visit pharmacy to purchase prescribed medicines by registered medical practitioner and rest of 23.30 per cent consumers' first intension to visit pharmacy to purchase OTC (Over the Counter) medicines also.

### **Abbreviation:**

OTC: Over the Counter

DTCA: Direct- To-Consumer Advertising

NASAID: Non Steroid Anti Inflammatory Drugs

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