

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE TOWARDS UNHEALTHY MARKETING OF  
PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**Vasanthan A.<sup>\*1</sup>, Senthilkumar K. L.<sup>2</sup>, Anandharaj G.<sup>3</sup>, Ponnarasu M. K.<sup>4</sup>, Vignesh V.<sup>4</sup> and Gopinath R.<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Pharmacy, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu.<sup>2</sup>Principal, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Pharmacy, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu.<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Pharmacy, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu.<sup>4</sup>B. Pharm Final Year Student, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Pharmacy, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu.**\*Corresponding Author: Vasanthan A.**

Associate Professor, Sri Vijay Vidyalaya College of Pharmacy, Dharmapuri, Tamilnadu.

Article Received on 02/01/2022

Article Revised on 22/01/2022

Article Accepted on 12/02/2022

**ABSTRACT**

Unhealthy factors in marketing of pharmaceutical products get increased day by day. Although online pharmaceutical marketing can potentially benefit both physicians and patients, it can also harm these groups by misleading them. We conducted a review of the available literature on online pharmaceutical marketing, in order to identify factors that contribute to Internet users suffering by online pharmaceutical misinformation, and also we conducted a survey and collect the data about trust in online health information and physician. The results are favor for the good health care system. Online misinformation that affecting people health condition due to internet dependence of the people.

**KEYWORDS:** Mis-marketing, Misinformation, Internet, Online marketing.**INTRODUCTION**

Unhealthy marketing of pharmaceutical products have increasing in many countries especially in developing countries due to their poor concentration in health care of people. It happens widely without any legal consequences in many areas. The health care authority seems to be less effective in those activities. These type of marketing practices have happening only for the profit of their companies.

The Internet has existed for a few decades and it becomes more essential thing amongst the people. Internet use in general and specifically with regard to health information, has notably increased over a short period. Nearly two-thirds of world adults had gone online and nearly two-thirds of these adults had searched for health information at least once in the previous year. The growth of online health information services and patient forums can be seen as an encouraging development. These resources provide an unexpected support network for millions of patients and provide invaluable health information. The Internet has increasingly permitted pharmaceutical companies to bypass traditional safeguards in the doctor-patient relationship by marketing products directly to consumers (DTC). Consumers include patients as well as their prescribing physicians, since to be sold; a prescription must be deemed necessary by a doctor and desired by a patient. Pharmaceutical companies therefore seek to

influence both physicians and patients through provider-directed and direct-to-consumer marketing, respectively. Inspire of both marketing types effectively sell medications; the majority of these marketing efforts are provider-directed,

Pharmaceutical companies spend more level of money on promotion, including sales representatives, samples and advertisements. An advertisement includes broadcast and print media, sponsorship of educational events and conferences. In many countries, most of the Pharmaceutical spend at least \$10 to \$15 billion for their promotion. In developing countries sales representatives are act as only source of drug information. This report is part of a project on drug promotion being carried out by WHO and HAI Europe. This project involved collecting and analyzing existing information on promotion. A database including over 2700 journal articles, books and other material has been developed. Research studies from these databases were analyzed and produced the basis of this report. According to the research suggests that doctor's attitudes to promotion in different, and do not necessarily match their behavior. Their opinions differ on the value of sales representatives, on whether they should be banned during medical training, and on whether doctors are adequately trained to interact with them. Most doctors think information from pharmaceutical companies is unfair, but many think it is

useful. Health professionals find small gifts from pharmaceutical companies are acceptable.

Despite of the Internet is acting as a powerful medium for information and marketing, it can also be used to misinformation and mis-marketing. Pharmaceutical companies mislead user's safety or efficacy information; this influence may be leads to misinformation. Inaccuracies, imbalances, failures to meet accepted scientific standards and other misleading presentations may all result in poor patient outcomes, including increased healthcare costs and patients are choose to buy new drugs over cheaper alternatives, including non-pharmaceutical treatments. It also leads to injury or death when patients are persuaded to buy drugs for which there exist safer alternatives, or for which marketed drugs are not fully approved.

Pharmaceutical company misinformation takes place not only for the supply of misleading information strategies by companies, but also for the psychological vulnerabilities of people. Internet users whether patients in need, or clinicians strapped for time are more likely to be misled. There is a need for an understanding of the interaction between Internet enabled misinformation and human vulnerabilities to this misinformation. Despite of many evidence for the pharmaceutical companies spread misinformation on online medium for the purpose of marketing, there is no chance to prove that the information are made by these pharmaceutical companies.

### The Unhealthy Marketing Practices

Unhealthy marketing of pharmaceutical products are widely takes place through the online by advertisements, emails, online domains, company websites, emails, blog spots etc, Some of the activities to be observed by the research studies in my locality and considered as unhealthy factors of pharmaceutical marketing are listed below.

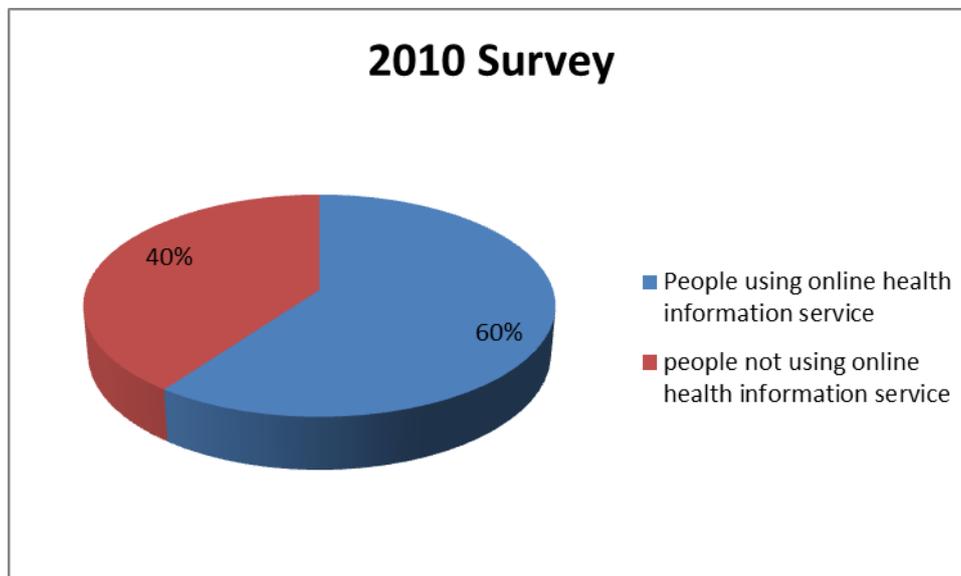
- Misinformation in online for Pharmaceutical marketing.
- Direct to Consumer Marketing through Online

### Misinformation in online for Pharmaceutical marketing

The information which is placed in the various places of online are not completely reliable. It may chance to be spread for reason of marketing strategies of the pharmaceutical companies. The effects which are produced by the misinformation placed in the online are seems to be harmful and serious health injury. The people have some factors leads to expose into the Misinformation in online.

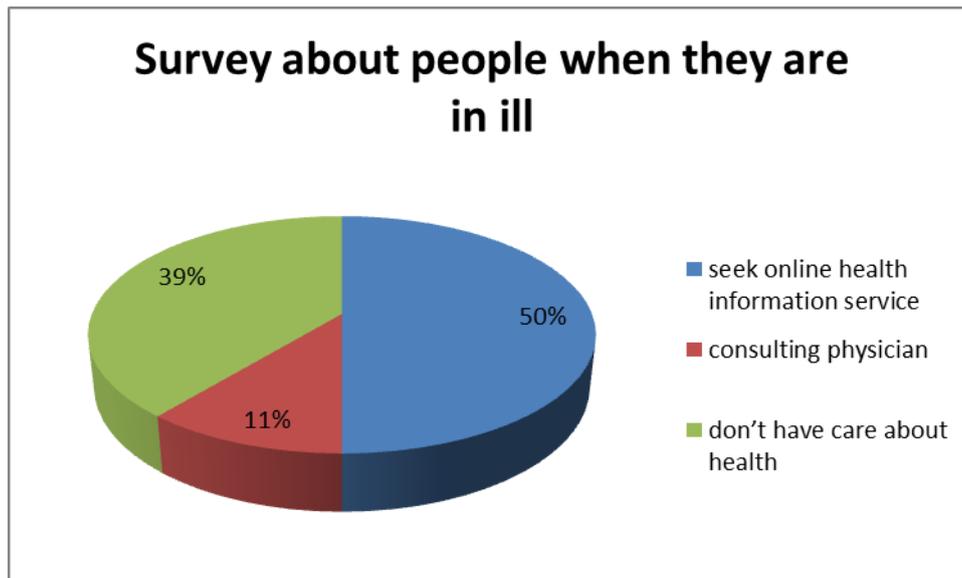
#### 1. Internet dependence

The medical community as well as the public depends on the Internet for health information. Because of the health information services get growing day by day. According to the survey which is taken in 2010 over 12,000 people in 12 developed nations, at least 60% of people those with Internet access seek health information online.



Even my survey says that about 50% of participating patients reported turning to the Internet first for health information, while only about 11% initially spoke with a physician, remaining 39% of patients don't have care about their health. It leads to serious health injury to the patients in need of health care. Even Physician

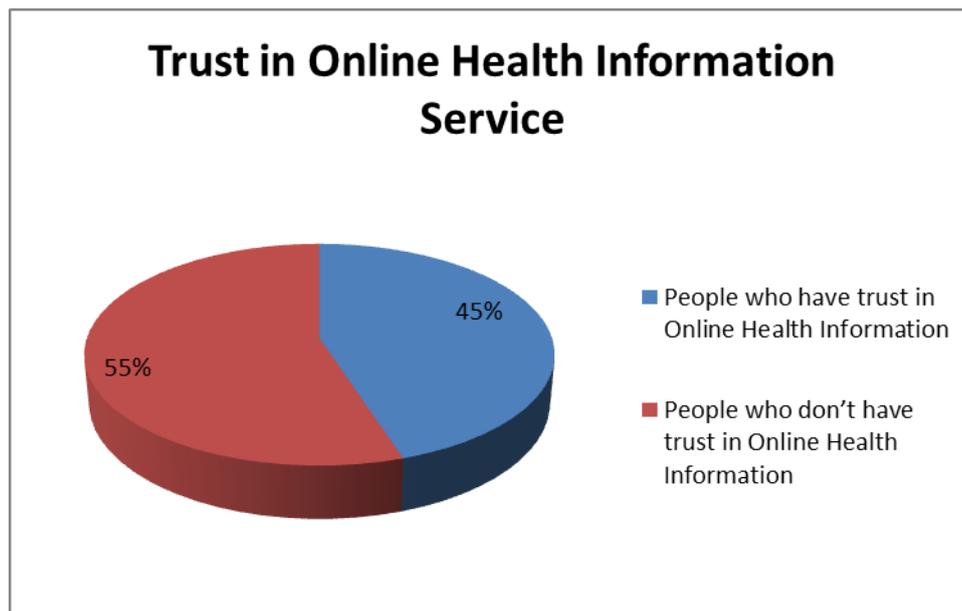
dependence on the Internet appears to be even greater than that of patients. Because physicians are need to grow their knowledge in medicine and the updating is necessary for the physician. But the information accuracies are questionable.



### 2. Blinded trust in online information

Due to the dependence on the Internet, the fact that is majority of physicians and patients had blinded trust in online information. There is no any evidence truth which is placed in the information. Trust which is building in

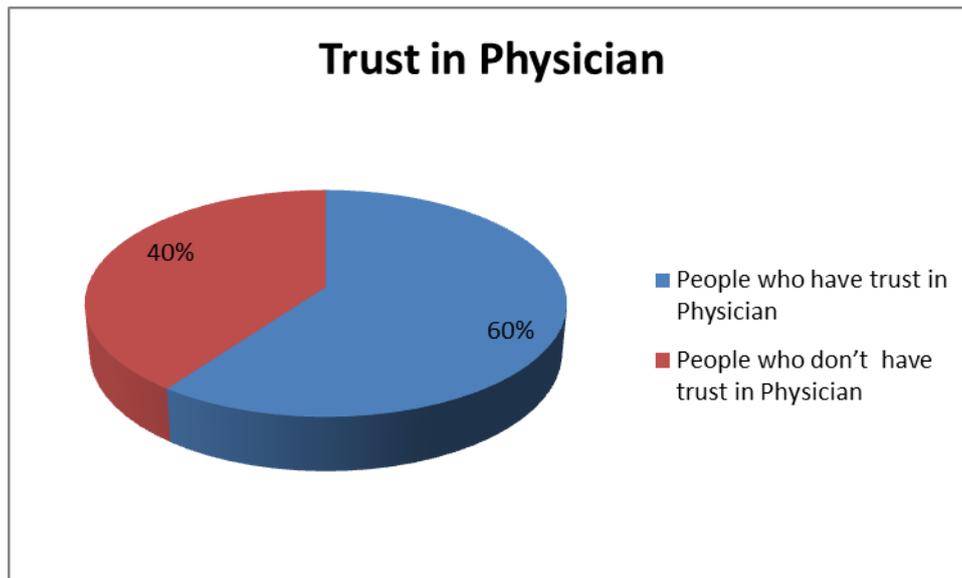
that information is according to the health related websites. According to my survey about 45% of people have trust in the online health information service. It leads to more risk of self medication and self diagnosis and it paved a way for unaware death of patients.



### 3. Social isolation

Social isolation is considered as the major factor in Internet users have trust in pharmaceutical misinformation in online. Some patients feel isolated from the outer environment and they do not believe in physicians. They don't believe that busy doctors have time to attend adequately to their medical problems. For those patients, Internet can provide a limitless information source available every time. Usually patients suffering from fever or illness are already at a greater risk of feeling alone, afraid and they don't have any significant social support. The survey takes place in my area says that 60% of isolated people don't have trust in

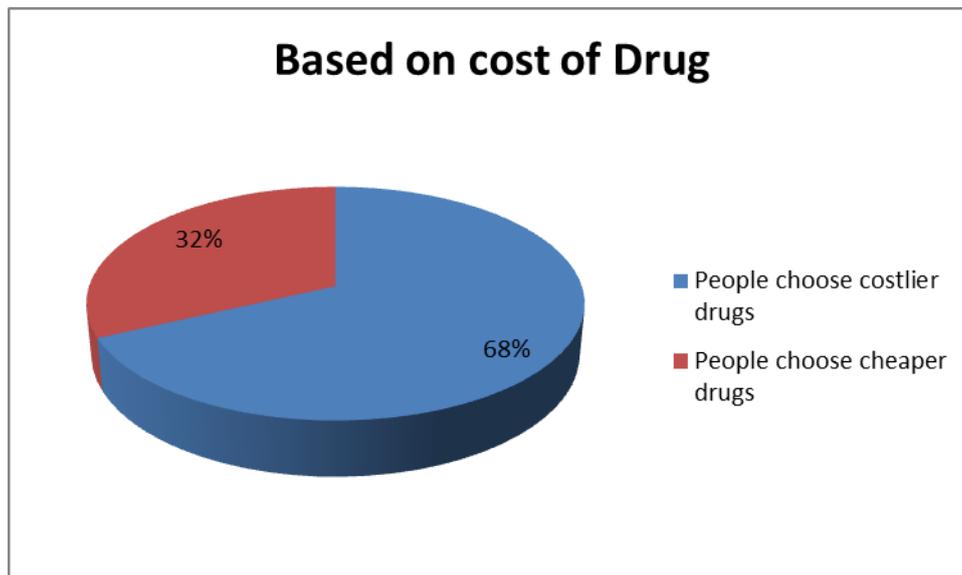
physician and they prefer only self medication as per the online information.



#### Direct to Consumer marketing through online

The U.S. and New Zealand are the only countries where DTC is legal. Americans also pay more for drugs and devices than any other country. The pharmaceutical companies spend millions of money in DTC marketing because they thought that it was the best way to market their product. Due to DTC consume more amount of

budget of the Company, it will reflect in the pricing of the product. Even people also prefer costlier branded drugs than cheaper drugs. In my research studies also says like about 68% of people have choose to buy costlier drugs when compared to the cheaper drugs. They thought that costlier drugs have the best quality. The perfect example for this strategy is insulin marketing.



#### CONCLUSION

In this article, we have explored and Surveyed about Unhealthy Marketing of pharmaceutical products on the Internet can exist within different web domains and also direct marketing to the consumers. Specifically, we examined the domains of search engines, drug company websites, e-mail lists, blogs and wikis, and health information services. In analyzing these domains, we found techniques of mis-marketing that were both largely domain specific (e.g., deleting negative drug information on medical wikis, using search engine optimization techniques, and deploying avatars).

The Internet is a complex medium, with dynamic and salient information constantly engaging the user's attention across multiple domains. Given the serious health and social trust implications of drug misinformation, Internet pharmaceutical marketing cannot be treated just like any other kind of Internet marketing. Although prescriptions for addressing drug misinformation have focused on the marketing strategies that pharmaceutical companies employ, the current review suggests that this conceptual framework for understanding pharmaceutical misinformation online

should be broadened to include patient vulnerabilities to this information, in particular

- Internet dependence
- excessive trust in the online health information
- Social isolation

## REFERENCE

1. Union IT: Internet users (per 100 people). The World Bank. Available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.NET.USER.P2>. Accessed December 21, 2011.
2. Hesse BW, Nelson DE, Kreps GL, et al: Trust and sources of health information: the impact of the Internet and its implications for health care providers—finding from the first Health Information National Trends Survey. *Arch Intern Med*, 2005; 165: 2618–24.
3. Zodpey SP, Negandhi HN, Tiwari RR: Online resources for occupational health physicians. *Indian J Occup Environ Med*, 2011; 15: 3–5.
4. Nisbet MC: Drug companies wait for FDA guidelines on social media marketing. *Big Think*, November 17, 2011. Available at <http://bigthink.com/ideas/41144>. Accessed December 29, 2011.
5. Donohue JM, Cevalco M, Rosenthal MB: A decade of direct-to consumer advertising of prescription drugs. *N Engl J Med*, 2007; 357: 673–81.
6. Chester J: *Digital Destiny: New Media and the Future of Democracy*. New York: The New Press, 2007.
7. Gellad ZF, Lyles KW: Direct-to-consumer advertising of pharmaceuticals. *Am J Med*, 2007; 120: 475–80.
8. Brody H: Pharmaceutical industry financial support for medical education: benefit, or undue influence? *J Law Med Ethics*, 2009; 37: 451–60.
9. Kessler DA: Addressing the problem of misleading advertising. *Ann Intern Med*, 1992; 116: 950–1.
10. De Freitas J, Falls BA, Haque OS, et al: Vulnerabilities to misinformation in online pharmaceutical marketing. *J R Soc Med*, 2013; 106: 184–9.