

Summer Training
At
**GHC Drugs and Pharmaceuticals
Pvt Ltd**

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A Report
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Acknowledgement

Interning in GHC was a very fulfilling experience, and naturally I have plenty of people to thank. GHC is a young pharma company, with plenty of leaders such as PK Pathak sir, Prashant Bhamare sir, and Arun Kapoor sir, who interacted with us time and time again despite their busy schedules. I would also like to thank my on-field mentors, Jitender Rathi sir, Shahid sir, Aamir sir and Jay Prakash sir. All of them were on hand to provide a drop of their vast experience, while also clearing any doubts. I would also like to thank the college for this opportunity, and especially my mentor, Dr Sandeep Narula for his constant guidance throughout. A word of thanks also goes out to Dr. PR Sodani, the president of IIHMR. Lest I forget, I bear an immense sense of gratitude towards all the pharmacists who participated in my survey, and also gave some interesting insights and engaged me in fruitful discussions.

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Acronyms/Abbreviations

1. GHC: Good Health Care
2. DOI: Digital Object Identifier
3. MAT: Moving Annual Total
4. CMO: Chief of Marketing Operations
5. HMS: Head of Marketing and Sales
6. COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING

Introduction

GHC Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Pvt Ltd is a Mumbai-based private Indian pharmaceutical company, incorporated on 17th of July 2020. KK Kumari and PK Shiv Das Pathak are the directors of this company. GHC's motto is 'good quality for all'. 'Honour Your Healthcare Heroes' is a landmark initiative by GHC, which aims to honour and reward medical frontline workers for their constant efforts to uphold the healthcare system in our country. This summer internship began promisingly, with the company director PK Pathak himself taking time out to interact with the interns, along with other important people from the company, including Prashant Bhamare and Arun Kapoor. They laid out their expectations from the students regarding the internship.

Mission

We promise to provide G3 (**G**ood product, **G**ood science and **G**ood relationship) through H3 (purpose of **H**appiness, culture of **H**elpfulness and philosophy of **H**onouring healthcare heroes).

Vision

"Good Quality for All"

The objectives of this internship were:

- Studying and summarizing various research articles on 'Innovation in Healthcare' (literature review).
- Developing patient journeys with respect to diseases covered by GHC products.
- Studying and developing a brand plan for assigned brand.
- Developing social media promotion strategy for assigned brand.
- Gathering on-field experience by making field trips with marketing representatives of GHC, visiting doctors and pharmacies.
- Submitting fortnightly reports to the college mentor based on the daily work done in the internship.
- Preparing a project report on the learnings and findings through the internship.
- Conducting a research study during the summer internship.

Mode of Data Collection

Data about the company was collected from the corporate presentation of GHC that was provided to us. Also, the visual aid for various paediatric and orthopedic drugs was provided to us, along with the market data for all the GHC and competitor brands. Internet was used as a resource to study competitor products and their promotions. Stock images and videos from websites such as pexels.com were used to develop social media promotional content. All other relevant data, statistics, research articles etc., were also downloaded from the internet from various websites.

GENERAL FINDINGS

We interacted with the Director, CMO, HMS and corporate affairs in charge of the company. In terms of departments, we initially interacted with the marketing team and later, with the sales team as well.

The respective general findings from the respective departments were as follows:

MARKETING TEAM

- The intricacies of a pharmaceutical company's marketing team, an insight into market research, market statistics, forecasting performance based on data etc.
- The thought-process behind preparing a brand plan in two different positions, for an existing product and for an upcoming product.
- Developing communication strategy for selling the product.
- Analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the brand.
- Preparing visual aids and contents for sending to doctors, for promotions.



Figure 1: A visual aid developed for promotional mails.

- Learning about social media marketing and how it is relevant to a pharmaceutical company.
- Learning how to develop effective digital marketing strategies for various platforms such as Facebook, twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, email etc.

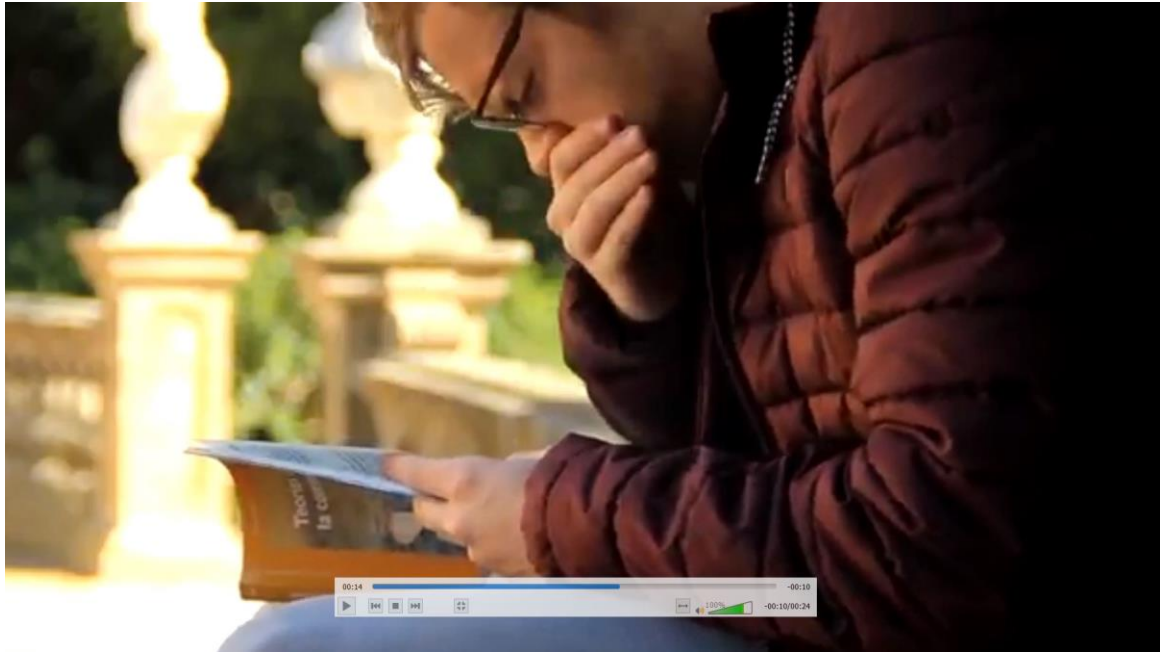


Figure 2: A snapshot from a promotional video

SALES TEAM

- Discovering the entire process of following leads, visiting doctors, and promoting products, using various tools such as visual aids, reminders, and sample medicines.





- The different communication strategies involved in product marketing, offering reduced prices, offers, and concessions to make the deal successful.
- Visiting chemists and following up doctor calls, by communicating them to stock the company medicine, and giving them the distributor's contacts.
- Also, urging chemists to stock drugs of our brands by offering better deals and offers than others.
- Following up with other chemists regarding the sale of previously supplied drugs.
- Visiting others in the supply chain, such as stockers.



Conclusive Learnings

Here are the conclusive learnings from the observational aspect of the summer internship at GHC:

- Learning the correct way to tackle research papers, first by reading the abstract, then looking for keywords related to the specific information we are searching for in the paper.
- Summarizing the content after reading the research article systematically, in a tabular form, including the name, author, year, DOI, and a summary from the paper.
- Developing a patient journey in a picturesque, interactive way, preferably in the form of a flow chart, and presenting it in such a way that it is understandable.
- Learning what a brand plan is and studying a sample brand plan for an existing product.
- Understanding figures about the market such as MAT data.
- Developing a brand plan from scratch and making choices that would strategically benefit the product.
- Developing relevant social media marketing strategy for every major social media platform, and a digital marketing strategy for an assigned GHC brand (Goodmont L).
- Learning about the nature of interaction between doctors and the company workforce, by assisting them on doctor calls.
- Studying and analysing the various aspects of the company workforce's interaction with druggists and other players involved in the supply chain, such as stockers.
- Interacting with doctors and chemists and finding out about the different temperaments of people, and how to approach every person in a different way to maximize effectiveness of communication.
- Writing blogs and writeups associated with the digital marketing strategies of the company.
- Developing content like photos, videos, posters, campaigns for the social media marketing of the company.
- Seeing the sale of the product, understanding what sells and what doesn't sell in the market, making notes of the same.

Limitations

- Due to the COVID-19 situation, the entirety of the interaction with the marketing team was online, which was a poorer alternative to face-to face interaction.
- Possible field visits to the company manufacturing units were avoided due to the pandemic.
- Longer field visits could not be possible due to the pandemic situation and the grueling weather.

Suggestions

- One or two field visits to the manufacturing plant or a company workspace should be made possible, so that the interns can see the inner workings of the company and possibly interact with a few staff members.
- Fieldwork should be introduced at an earlier stage of the internship and should be longer so that practical experience can be gained quickly.
- Social media strategy should be given more importance and students should be allowed a week or two to express their ideas on the company's social media platform.

PROJECT REPORT

A STUDY OF FACTORS AT PLAY DURING THE STOCKING OF PAEDIATRIC MEDICATION IN DELHI PHARMACIES

Introduction

Pharmacists comprise of the third largest population of health care workers in the world. [1] Pharmacists, when given an opportunity to work to their full potential, are the only healthcare professionals who can work with physicians and help eliminate various adverse effects and other interactions of drugs in patients.[2] In India, the job of the pharmacist is typically limited to dispensing of medicines, as opposed to countries like Canada, where it is the responsibility of the pharmacist to fill the prescriptions, and give out information related to side effects, dosage, patient compliance etc., and the doctor just takes care of the diagnosis.[3] In India, pharmacies are practically just medicine retail shops, and then too the stocking is heavily influenced by the brands the doctor prescribes. Pharma companies market their product to the doctor, and it is conveyed to nearby chemist stores to stock the same brand. This restricts the pharmacist's freedom to choose which brands to stock.

However, freedom of choice exists to a certain degree, as pharmacies are numerous and sometimes isolated from doctor clinics or nursing homes. There are various factors at play when a pharmacist chooses to stock his shop. Paediatric medication is an important category for pharmaceutical companies, and especially for new pharma companies, to quickly target many doctors including general physicians and paediatricians. As of 2015, India has an estimated 1.21 lakh practicing paediatricians.[4]

This study is aimed at studying the factors which influence a pharmacy owner's choice of brand while stocking paediatric medication. It also looks at the impact of online pharmacies on retail pharmacies.

Rationale

When it comes to paediatric medication, the factors influencing the choice of brand slightly differ from other medication categories. Since children are the intended consumers of these drugs, aspects like dosage form, flavours, and ease of use matter. Flavours, as a defining factor, seldom have a significance when it comes to drugs

intended for adults. Factors like brand popularity, availability and quality are important while stocking any medication category, and paediatrics are no different. This study explores all these factors, and possibly others, in Delhi, the capital of India and one of the four major metropolitan cities in the country.

The significance of such a study lies from the point of view of a pharmaceutical company. At the end of the day, their product is getting sold at these pharmacies, and it will be sold better if it is stocked to a greater extent, and any pharmaceutical company would be interested in studying the stocking behaviour of chemists. This way, they can improve their product, their marketing strategies, and overall develop as a company.

Apart from this primary objective, the study also explores a secondary aspect. Online pharmacies have been on a rise in the recent times, and even more so in the post-COVID era. This is because of the ease of use and positive consumer experience on platforms such as 1mg, Pharmeasy, Netmeds and MedLife. This market in India is an ever evolving one. It has been showing accelerated growth each passing day. Money inbound through investments is on the rise along with Internet users, stimulating its growth.^[5] The questionnaire also includes a couple of questions exploring the attitude of pharmacists towards these online pharmacies. Another aspect this questionnaire explores is related to the often-forgotten duty of the pharmacist, to dispense useful information about drugs, such as side effects, food interactions, dosage etc.

Research Question

What are the most important factors pharmacists consider while they are stocking paediatric medications in their pharmacy, in Delhi, India?

Research Objectives

Primary objectives of this study:

1. To find out the most and least important factors pharmacists consider while stocking paediatric medications in pharmacies.
2. To find out the most popular paediatric dosage form.

Secondary objective of this study is:

1. To investigate the attitude of pharmacy owners regarding the effect of online pharmacies on physical pharmacies, especially during the COVID-struck times.
2. The frequency of dispensing of additional information related to dosage, side effects, patient compliance etc. by the pharmacists.

Methodology

Research design: The study design is descriptive design. It asks the respondents questions about what, where, and how questions, but not why.

Research Method: Survey research was conducted. A 12-question survey was prepared, and physical copies printed out. Then pharmacy-to-pharmacy visits were made, and the forms were filled out either by the pharmacists themselves, or by the surveyor with the help of the pharmacist. This method is heavily dependent on the honesty and accuracy of the responses of the pharmacists.

Area: Delhi, India was used as the area of survey. Delhi has 11 districts, is the capital city of India, and one of the four metropolitan cities of India. It has a rich historical background, a population of over 11 million as of 2011^[6], and it is now considered by many estimates to be the most or second-most productive metro area of India.^[7] According to an estimate, Delhi has over 7000 chemist shops.^[8]

Data: Primary qualitative data was gathered for the study.

Sample size: 50 pharmacies from all over Delhi were visited. Maximum possible representation of the 11 districts was attempted, although not in a systematic manner.

Sampling method: Simple random sampling was used; areas were visited as a part of the field trips through the course of the summer training program, and some independent trips were made as well to reach the criteria of 50 shops. Shops were indiscriminately picked, and the responses generated were completely random and on-the-spot.

Research instrument (tools and techniques): Physical forms of a questionnaire, with mostly multiple-choice questions, filled via shop-to-shop survey, and later manually translated to an identical google form.

Analysis: Descriptive analysis of the survey responses, with the help of Microsoft Excel, pie charts and tables of the data generated from the same.

Study duration: 8 weeks

Literature Review

- Albadr Y, Khan TM. Factors influencing community pharmacist decision to dispense generic or branded medicines; Eastern Province, Alahsa, Saudi Arabia. Saudi Pharm J. 2015;23(2):143-146. doi:10.1016/j.jsps.2014.07.002: This research article found that pharmacists working in hospital pharmacies are heavily motivated in their stocking by physicians' prescriptions and would stock good quality medicines over substandard.
- Mennella JA, Beauchamp GK. Optimizing oral medications for children. Clin Ther. 2008;30(11):2120-2132. doi:10.1016/j.clinthera.2008.11.018: This research article observes that using pleasant flavor volatile compounds goes a long way to encourage children to take a drug but the effect is not very prominent when it comes to extremely bitter APIs.
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- Nunn T, Williams J. Formulation of medicines for children. Br J Clin Pharmacol. 2005;59(6):674-676. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2125.2005.02410.x: This research article observes that small volume liquid medicines are suitable for younger age groups in children.
- Galani V. Choice of better medicine in India: branded vs generic medicine. Pharm Pharmacol Int J. 2017;5(3):124-125. DOI: 10.15406/ppij.2017.05.00125: This review article states that branded drugs are more profitable than generics as they generate a higher commission.
- Practical Pharmacy for Developing Countries January-March 2010, Issue 21, WHO, states that it is essential that medicinal needs of a community are well estimated.
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- Navneel Maji, E-Pharmacy: The Growth Story Of 2020, BW Businessworld, December 2020: This article claims that over 70 per cent of users are interested in using e-pharmacies in the post-COVID era, due to its positive experience along with a large acceptance among low-income households.

- Gireesh Babu, Online pharmacies see record funding in 2019, investments double to \$321 mn, Business Standard, July 2020: This news article reveals that private equity and venture capital investments have become twice as much as before for the online pharmacy segment in the year 2019.
- Don Keller, “Why is Packaging Design Artwork Key in Pharmaceutical Marketing?”, Catalpha: This article is of the opinion that pharma packaging is important, and a recognisable and appealing artwork is necessary to advertise the company brand and image.
- Alicia Cheung, THE IMPORTANCE OF CUSTOMER SERVICE IN PHARMACEUTICAL CONTRACT MANUFACTURING, Generis, January 2019: This article observes that the modern customers are better informed and have high expectations for product quality and support. This means that pharmaceutical companies are looking for partners who can provide great customer service to ensure brand success.
- Sinha, Hemant Kumar. “Role of pharmacists in retailing of drugs.” Journal of advanced pharmaceutical technology & research vol. 5,3 (2014): 107. doi:10.4103/2231-4040.137383: This review article stated that it is a pharmacist’s responsibility, along with a physician, to prevent any dangerous drug interactions in the patient.
- Ansari, Ja. “Drug interaction and pharmacist.” Journal of young pharmacists : JYP vol. 2,3 (2010): 326-31. doi:10.4103/0975-1483.66807: This review article opines that a pharmacist possesses a detailed knowledge of medicine and can relate unexpected symptoms possible adverse effects of drug therapy.

Data Analysis

About the Respondents: This study was conducted on 50 pharmacies all over Delhi. Maximum representation of districts was attempted, but 100% representation of all 11 districts of Delhi could not be done due to obvious travel constraints presented by COVID-19. However, pharmacies from most districts were covered.

Here is a pie-chart depicting the district-wise participation of pharmacies in the survey:

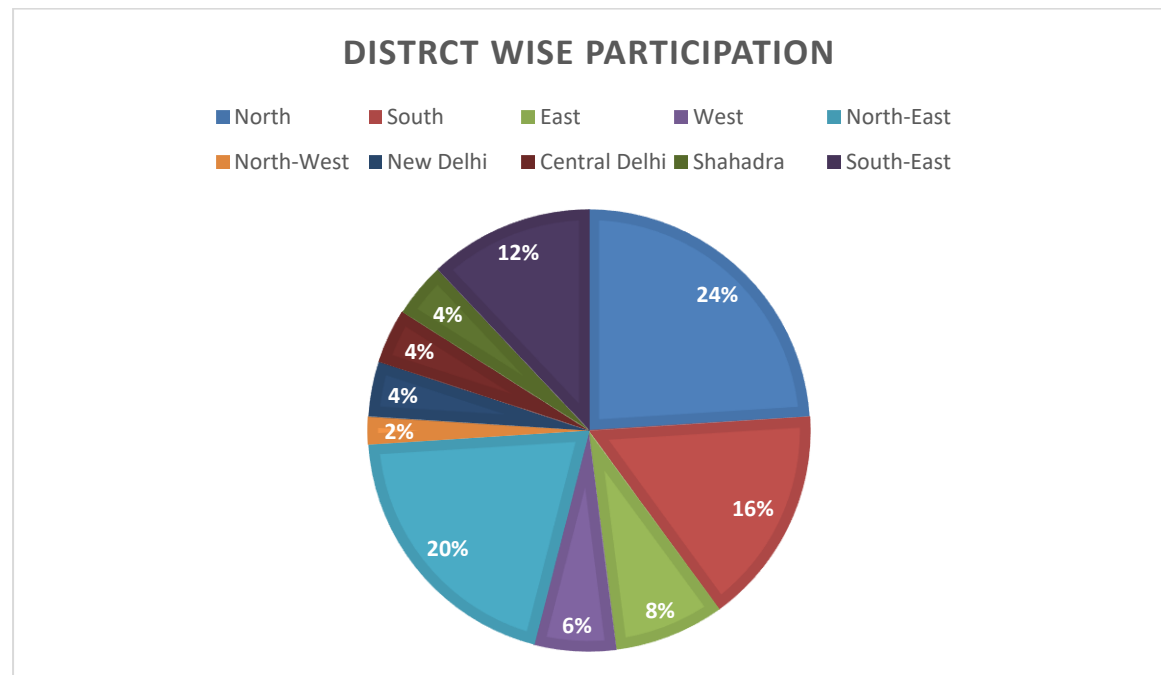


Figure 3: A pie chart depicting district wise participation of pharmacies in the survey.

As we can observe from the pie-chart, 10 of the 11 districts of Delhi are represented, with the maximum participation seen from the North-East district and the lowest participation, just one store, seen from the North-West district.

Another observation about the respondents is that most of the pharmacies surveyed were community pharmacies (96%, n=48).

2. Type of Pharmacy

50 responses

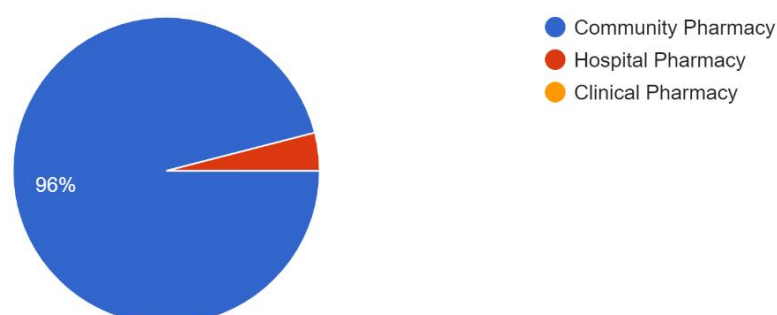


Figure 3: A pie chart depicting the type of pharmacies studied.

A detailed tabular representation of the participants' district and type of pharmacy is as follows:

Table 1: Characteristics of pharmacies surveyed.

District in which Pharmacy is located

S no.	District	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1.	North	12	24	24
2.	South	8	16	40
3.	East	4	8	48
4.	West	3	6	54
5.	North-East	10	20	74
6.	North-West	1	2	76
7.	New Delhi	2	4	80
8.	Central	2	4	84
9.	Shahadra	2	4	88
10.	South-East	6	12	100
11.	South-West	0	0	100

Type of Pharmacy

S no.	Type	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1.	Community Pharmacy	48	96	96
2.	Hospital Pharmacy	2	4	100
3.	Clinical Pharmacy	0	0	100
4.	Others	0	0	100

Analysis of Responses

- The respondents were asked about the factors influencing the stocking of solid dosage forms in paediatric medication. The responses were as follows:

4. What is the most important factor you look for in a brand while stocking paediatric solid dosage forms (tablets, powders, fruit salts etc)?

50 responses

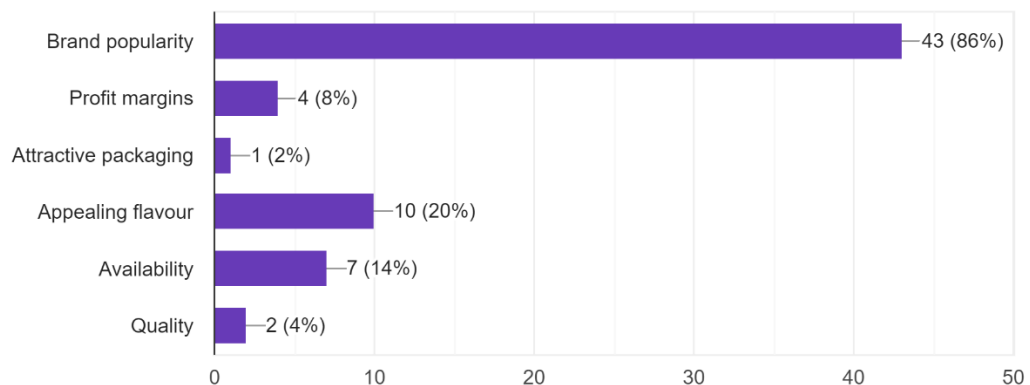


Figure 4: A bar chart depicting the most influential factors while stocking solid paediatric medication.

Participants were allowed to select more than one option. The responses clearly indicate 'brand popularity' as the most influential factor while stocking solid paediatric medication, with 86% participants choosing it. Attractive packaging was on the other end of the spectrum, with only 2% respondents (only one) picking it as an influential factor.

- The respondents were asked the same question as above, albeit for liquid dosage forms. Here is a summary of responses:

5. What is the most important factor while stocking paediatric syrups/suspensions?

50 responses

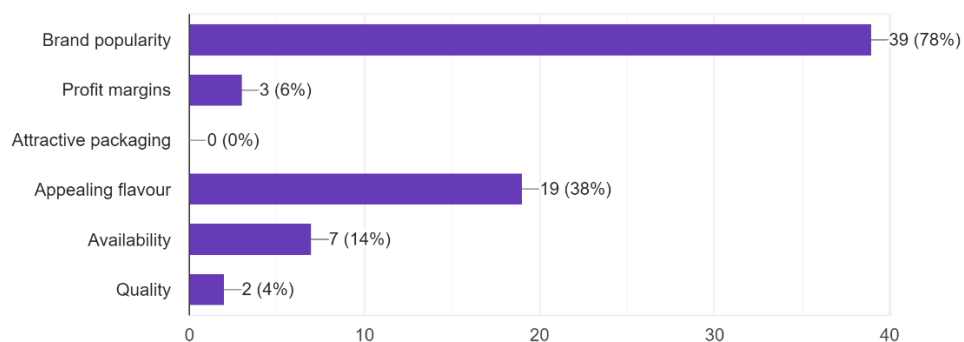


Figure 5: A bar chart the most influential factors while stocking liquid paediatric medication

Here, we can clearly observe that brand popularity, once again, comes up trumps as the chief factor, although it is obvious considering the influence of doctors' prescription on the stocking. The point to be observed here is 38% people choosing 'appealing flavour'

as a factor. This tells us very much about flavour being an influencing factor in children's medication, and especially syrups and suspensions.

- The respondents were asked about how important a stocked paediatric inventory was for a pharmacy, and the responses were:

6. How important is having a stocked paediatric inventory for a pharmacy?

50 responses

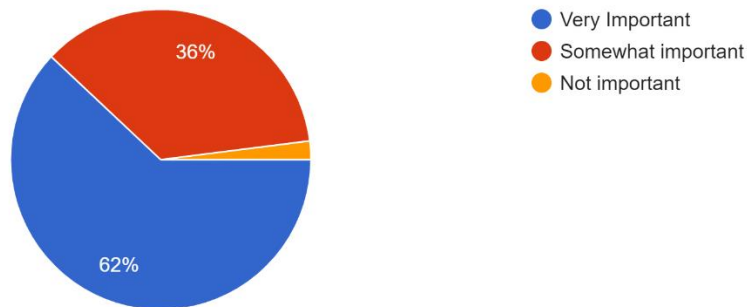


Figure 6: A pie chart depicting the importance of a stocked paediatric inventory for a pharmacy for Delhi Pharmacists

62% (n=31) pharmacists considered it very important, 36% (n=18) considered it somewhat important and 2% (n=1) considered it as not important.

- Respondents were asked about the frequency with which they stock new brands for paediatric medication, and they responded as follows:

7. How often do you stock new brands for your paediatric medication inventory?

50 responses

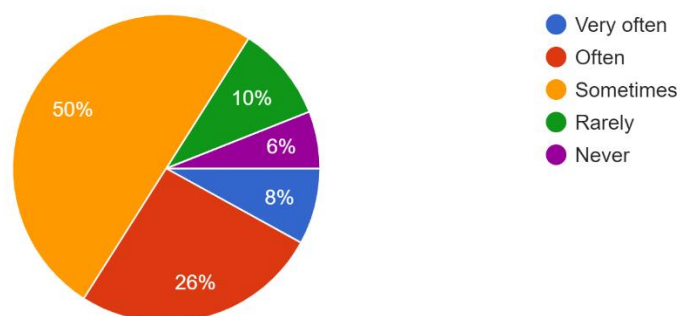


Figure 7: A pie chart depicting the frequency of stocking new brands.

- The factors people look for, while stocking new brands are:

8. While stocking new brands, what are the factors you look for?

50 responses

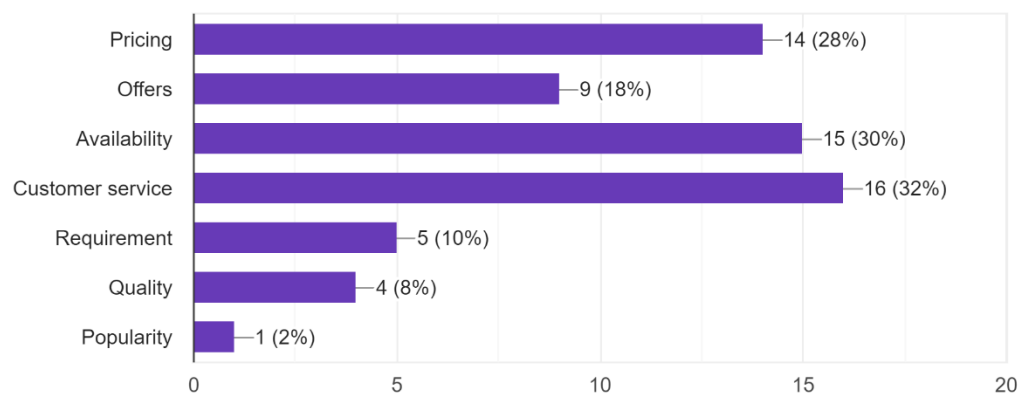


Figure 8: Factors considered while stocking new brands

Customer service, along with availability seems to be the most important factor when picking up new brands for the pharmacy.

- Here were the responses to the question which asked which are the most popular dosage forms when it comes to paediatrics:

9. What is the most popular paediatric dosage form?

50 responses

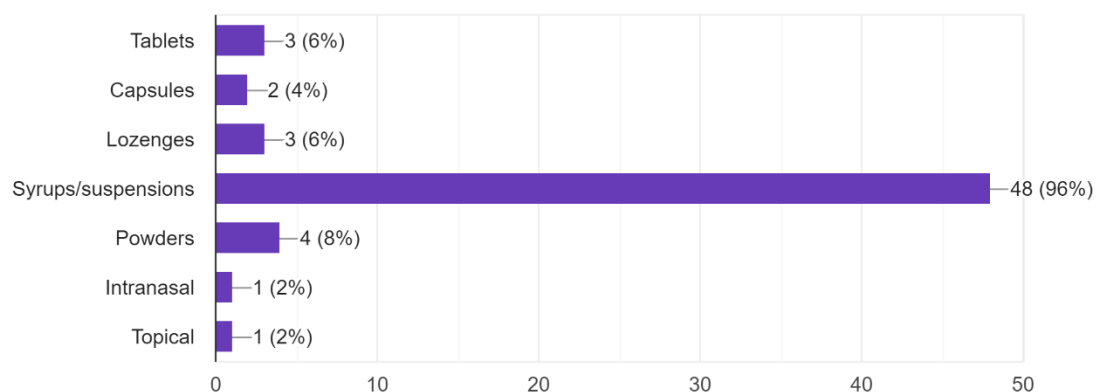


Figure 9: Most popular paediatric dosage forms

Syrups and suspensions are the clear winner here, with almost everyone (96%, n=48) agreeing that they are the most popular dosage form for paediatric medication.

- The pharmacists were also asked to what degree they agree or disagree that physical pharmacies have been affected by online pharmacies. The responses were as follows:

10. Do you agree that physical pharmacies have been affected by online pharmacies, especially during the COVID-19 period?

50 responses

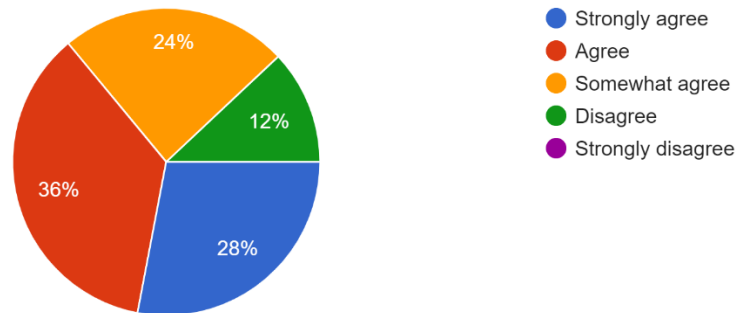


Figure 10: Pie chart showing degree of agreement about online pharmacies affecting retail stores.

It was a mixed bag, but most people (64%, n=32) either 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

- Respondents were asked about their willingness to invest in an e-pharmacy system for their stores:

11. Would you invest in an online pharmacy system for your store?

50 responses

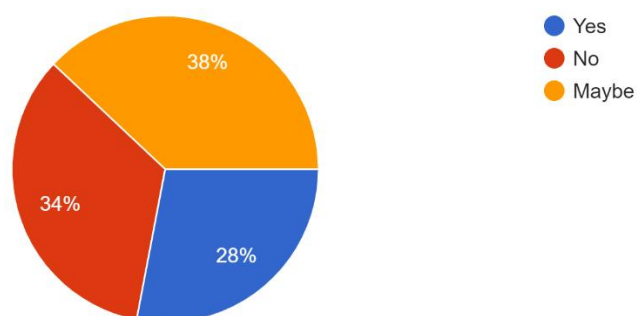


Figure 11: Pie chart depicting whether people would invest in an online pharmacy system

Again, a mixed bag, with responses scattered almost evenly across yes, no, and maybe. 38% (n=19) people responded with 'maybe'.

- Finally, the pharmacists were presented with a question which explored the frequency with which they gave out additional information related to paediatric medication, and they responded as follows:

12. How often do you impart additional information related to dosage, side effects, patient compliance etc while dispensing paediatric medication?

50 responses

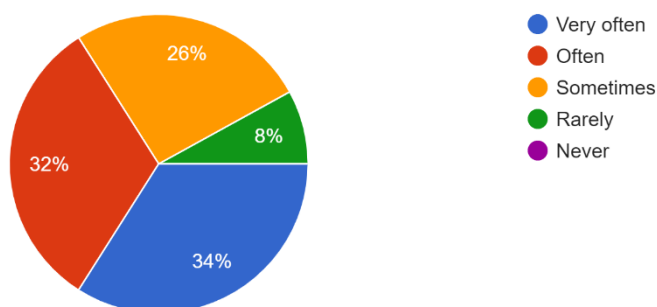


Figure 12: Pie chart depicting the frequency of giving out additional information with paediatric medicine.

Once again, the responses were not heavily inclined towards one particular option, although 66% pharmacists claim that they give out additional information related to paediatric drugs 'very often' or 'often'.

Conclusion

A survey exploring the influential factors with respect to stocking of paediatric medication was performed in Delhi, and it threw up some expected results. Brand popularity was always expected to trump all the other factors, as India follows a healthcare system where pharmacists are reduced to medicine dispensers. This restricts their choice to stock the branded or generic medication. When we are prepared to overlook brand popularity, we observe that flavour is a very important factor in paediatric medication. Also, newer brands are not very easily embraced by pharmacists, as 66% participants tend to stock them sometimes, rarely, or never. Another interesting conclusion drawn was that despite doctors holding all the cards in providing detailed information about the drugs patients are supposed to take, and patients generally not expecting pharmacists to come up with advice on the same, most pharmacists try to inform patients regarding any side effects, food interactions etc.

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Appendix

Questionnaire used in the survey:

Survey Questionnaire: An Assessment of Factors at Play While Stocking Paediatric Medication in Delhi Pharmacies

Demographics

1. Name of Pharmacy/Chemist Store _____

2. Type of Pharmacy
 - A. Community Pharmacy
 - B. Hospital Pharmacy
 - C. Clinical Pharmacy
 - D. Other

3. District
 - A. North
 - B. South
 - C. East
 - D. West
 - E. Central
 - F. New Delhi
 - G. North West
 - H. North East
 - I. Shahadra
 - J. South West
 - K. South East

Analysis

4. What is the most important factor you look for in a brand while stocking paediatric solid dosage forms (tablets, powders, fruit salts etc)?

- A. Brand Popularity
- B. Profit Margins
- C. Attractive Packaging
- D. Appealing flavour
- E. Availability
- F. Others

5. What is the most important factor while stocking paediatric syrups/suspensions?

- A. Brand popularity
- B. Profit Margins
- C. Attractive Packaging
- D. Appealing flavour
- E. Availability
- F. Others

6. How important is having a stocked paediatric inventory for a pharmacy?

- A. Very Important
- B. Somewhat important
- C. Not important

7. How often do you stock new brands for your paediatric medication inventory?

- A. Very often
- B. Often

- C. Sometimes
- D. Rarely
- E. Very rarely

8. While stocking new brands, what are the factors you look for?

- A. Pricing
- B. Offers
- C. Availability
- D. Customer service
- E. Others

9. What is the most popular paediatric dosage form?

- A. Tablets
- B. Capsules
- C. Lozenges
- D. Syrups/Suspensions
- E. Powders
- F. Intranasal
- G. Topical
- H. Others

10. Do you agree that physical pharmacies have been affected by online pharmacies, especially during the COVID-19 period?

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat agree

- D. Disagree
- E. Strongly disagree

11. Would you invest in an online pharmacy system for your store?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe

12. How often do you impart additional information related to dosage, side effects, patient compliance etc. while dispensing paediatric medication?

- A. Very often
- B. Often
- C. Sometimes
- D. Rarely
- E. Very rarely

Annexure

S no.	Department	Date of Visit	% Of time Spent*	Interacted with
1.	Sales	June 16	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
2.	Sales	June 17	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
3.	Sales	June 18	1.78	Shahid (Marketing Rep)
4.	Sales	June 21	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
5.	Sales	June 22	1.78	Jay Prakash (Marketing Rep)
6.	Sales	June 23	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
7.	Sales	June 24	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
8.	Sales	June 25	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
9.	Sales	June 28	1.78	Aamir Khan (Marketing Rep)
Total: % Time spent in Sales			16.02	

*% of Time spent is calculated by $(1/56) \times 100$, as the internship was 56 days long.