

# Internship Report

Title: EVALUATING CONSUMER AWARENESS AND USAGE TRENDS OF ANTACID MEDICATION

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Internship duration: 3 months

Institution: IIHMR University, Jaipur

Department: MBA Pharmaceutical Management

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## 1. Introduction

Gastrointestinal issues such as hyperacidity, indigestion, and reflux diseases are common in India due to changing dietary patterns and stressful lifestyles. To alleviate these problems, consumers often turn to over-the-counter (OTC) antacid medications like ENO and Digene. While these are easily accessible, their irrational use without proper medical guidance raises public health concerns. This internship explored patterns in consumer behavior regarding antacid use, focusing on awareness, frequency, and sources of influence, to assess potential knowledge gaps.

## 2. Objectives

Primary Objectives:

1. To evaluate consumer awareness regarding antacid medications and their formulations.
2. To assess the usage patterns and product preferences in the consumption of antacids.

Secondary Objectives:

1. To identify key factors influencing the selection and use of antacid medications.
2. To determine demographic correlations with awareness and behavior trends.

### **3. Literature Review**

The review covered:

1. Historical use and pharmacological development of antacids.
2. Trends in national and international OTC antacid markets.
3. Widespread self-medication behavior and poor pharmacological knowledge among consumers.
4. Influence of branding, advertising, and pharmacist roles.
5. Risks like masking serious conditions, drug interactions, and rebound hyperacidity due to prolonged unsupervised use.

Multiple studies revealed that while antacids are widely used, understanding of side effects remains low. Marketing often outweighs medical rationale in influencing consumer behavior.

### **4. Methodology**

1. Design: Descriptive cross-sectional survey.
2. Sample: 123 respondents aged 18 and above who had consumed antacids in the past year.
3. Sampling Method: Purposive sampling using online platforms (Google Forms via WhatsApp, Telegram, and email).
4. Tool: A structured, validated questionnaire with closed-ended questions covering demographics, frequency, product preferences, awareness, and decision influencers.
5. Analysis: Microsoft Excel for descriptive statistics and visual representation (bar graphs, pie charts).
6. Ethical Protocol: Informed consent was obtained; anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout.

### **5. Results**

1. Demographics: Majority were students and working professionals aged between 18–35.
2. Frequency of Use: 38% used antacids rarely; ~18% used them frequently or daily.

3. Popular Brands: ENO (most popular), followed by Digene and Pantoprazole-based products.
4. Formulation Preference: Tablets were preferred (54%), followed by powders and syrups.
5. Awareness: 62% unaware of side effects; only 28% aware of risks like constipation, diarrhea, and drug interactions.
6. Sources of Influence: Pharmacists (29%) and doctors (22%) were key influences, though family/friends and advertising played major roles.
7. Self-Medication: 70% of users did not consult doctors.
8. Decision Drivers: Availability, brand familiarity, and taste were major influencers.

## 6. Discussion

The findings reflect a normalization of self-medication, driven by convenience, trust in brands, and poor access to reliable medical advice. Branding strongly influenced user choices, often overshadowing clinical safety. Although pharmacists were a major source of recommendations, their advisory role remains underutilized. Lack of awareness about risks poses potential health threats, especially for long-term users. The study echoes similar national trends, emphasizing the need for structured consumer education and pharmacist involvement.

## 7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates a widespread casual approach to antacid use among consumers, marked by poor awareness and high self-medication rates. While antacids offer short-term relief, their misuse can mask serious conditions and lead to complications. There is a pressing need for regulatory oversight, pharmacist training, improved labeling, and mass education campaigns to promote rational use of OTC antacid medications.

## 8. References

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4. Ruiz ME. (2010). Risks of self-medication practices.
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6. Rao PGM & Archana B. (2016). Rational use of medicines.