

Evaluating Consumer Awareness and Usage Trends of Antacid Medication

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Abstract

Gastrointestinal disorders such as hyperacidity and indigestion are commonly treated using antacid medications, which are widely available over the counter. However, consumer knowledge about these drugs, their side effects, and rational use remains uncertain. This study aims to assess consumer awareness, patterns of usage, and influencing factors in choosing antacids. A structured survey was conducted among 123 respondents of varying age groups and occupations, with data analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The study revealed that most consumers rely on pharmacist recommendations or self-medication, with brands like ENO and Digene being most frequently used. These findings indicate a gap in informed use and highlight the need for public education and pharmacist-led guidance.

1. Introduction

Antacids are used for the symptomatic relief of hyperacidity, gastroesophageal reflux, and indigestion. Despite being among the most consumed over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, the general public's awareness regarding their rational use is limited. Easy availability, aggressive marketing, and lack of professional consultation contribute to the widespread use of antacids without appropriate understanding. This study is conducted to explore consumer behavior, frequency of use, and understanding of antacid medication, to identify educational and regulatory needs in OTC medicine consumption.

2. Literature Review

Self-medication is increasing globally, particularly in the treatment of minor ailments such as acidity and heartburn. Various studies have indicated that a significant portion of the population uses OTC antacids regularly without consulting healthcare professionals.

- Gupta et al. (2019) assessed antacid use among Indian university students and reported high levels of self-prescription and brand-based selection.
- Sachdev et al. (2021) identified a lack of knowledge among urban populations regarding drug interactions and chronic misuse of antacids.
- Rao and Archana (2016) revealed that even medical students often practiced self-medication for acid-related disorders, underestimating potential health risks.

- WHO has emphasized the importance of consumer education for responsible self-medication.

3. Objectives

Primary Objectives:

- To evaluate consumer awareness of antacid medications and their formulations.
- To understand usage trends, including frequency and preference of brand/formulation.

Secondary Objectives:

- To identify the key factors influencing antacid usage decisions.
- To assess the correlation between demographic factors (age, gender, occupation) and consumption behavior.

4. Methodology

1. Study Design: Descriptive, cross-sectional survey.
2. Data Collection Tool: Structured Google Form questionnaire with closed-ended questions.
3. Sample Size: 123 respondents.
4. Population: Individuals aged 18 and above from various occupations and regions.
5. Data Analysis Tool: Microsoft Excel.
6. Parameters Studied:
 - Frequency and reason for use.
 - Preferred brand and dosage form.
 - Source of recommendation (doctor/pharmacist/self).
 - Knowledge of side effects and interactions.

5. Expected Outcomes

- Insights into public awareness and usage trends of antacids.
- Identification of common misconceptions and knowledge gaps.
- Data to support educational campaigns on responsible antacid usage.
- Recommendations for pharmacists to engage in community-level counseling.

6. Weekly Timeline Schedule (8 Weeks)

Week	Activity
Week 1	Finalization of research title, scope, and literature collection
Week 2	Drafting questionnaire and pilot testing
Week 3	Full-scale distribution of Google Form and data collection begins
Week 4	Data collection (continued) and preliminary cleaning
Week 5	Data compilation and statistical analysis using Excel
Week 6	Interpretation of results and preparation of charts/graphs
Week 7	Writing full report including findings, discussions, and conclusion
Week 8	Proofreading, reference formatting (Vancouver style), and submission preparation

7. References

1. Gupta V, Garg R, Mehta M. Awareness and use of over-the-counter antacid medications among university students in India. J Pharm Res. 2019;13(5):220–224.
2. Sachdev A, Choudhary P, Thakur A. Knowledge, attitude and practice regarding self-medication of antacids in urban populations. Int J Community Med Public Health. 2021;8(3):1342–1347.
3. Rao PGM, Archana B. Patterns of self-medication for acid-peptic disease among medical students. Indian J Pharmacol. 2016;48(6):681–685.
4. World Health Organization. Guidelines for the regulatory assessment of medicinal products for use in self-medication. Geneva: WHO; 2000.