

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING

INSIGHTS FROM AHMP INDIA FOUNDATION

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ABSTRACT



In India's evolving healthcare environment, marketing significantly shapes healthcare-seeking behavior. However, much of it lacks ethical transparency. This study titled "Challenges and Opportunities in Ethical Healthcare Marketing: Insights from AHMP India Foundation" investigates awareness, perceptions, and the role of AHMP India in promoting ethical marketing.

Using a mixed-method cross-sectional design, 145 responses were gathered via Google Forms, with additional qualitative insights.

Key findings include a major awareness gap (only 18.6% had prior knowledge), widespread exposure to misleading ads (63.4%), and a moderate correlation between deceptive content and declining trust ($p = 0.46$). Statistical tests highlighted the positive influence of AHMP membership on awareness levels.

Qualitative themes emphasized the dissonance between marketing and care, AHMP's transparency model, and the need for ethical literacy among youth.

This research calls for curriculum integration, public outreach, and conferences to promote ethical healthcare marketing and institutional trust.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The rapid expansion of digital healthcare marketing in India has led to an increase in unethical promotional practices. Despite existing laws and codes, misleading advertisements continue to shape public perceptions and influence patient decisions. This issue is further compounded by a lack of awareness and ethical education.

01

Unethical marketing practices such as exaggerated claims and emotional manipulation are still widespread, even with regulatory mechanisms in place.

02

Low ethical literacy among healthcare professionals, students, and consumers creates a gap in recognizing misleading information.

03

Digital platforms amplify misinformation, with limited oversight and high potential for public harm.

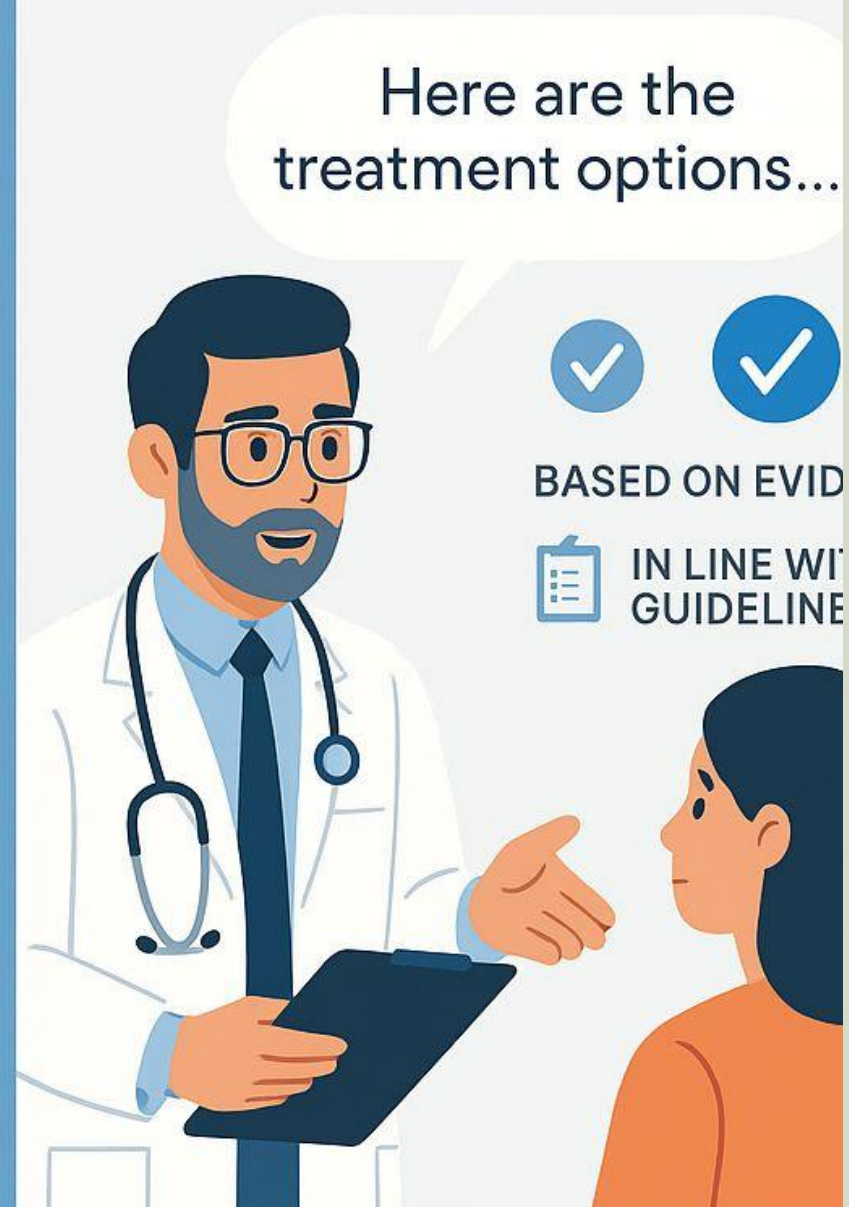
BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

UNETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING

FREE REPLACEMENT SURGERY



ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING



In India's growing healthcare sector, marketing plays a vital role in shaping public opinion and patient choices. However, many promotional practices lack ethical integrity, often using exaggerated claims and emotional manipulation.

Despite regulations by NMC, ASCI, and the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, unethical marketing continues—especially on digital platforms like social media and WhatsApp.

There is a major gap in awareness and ethical training among healthcare professionals and the public. In this context, AHMP India Foundation has emerged as a key player in promoting responsible, transparent healthcare communication through workshops, conferences, and outreach programs.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

- To analyze the existing scenario, challenges, and opportunities for ethical healthcare marketing in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVE

- To assess awareness and perceptions of healthcare professionals, students, and consumers toward ethical healthcare marketing.
- To evaluate the role of AHMP India Foundation in promoting ethical healthcare communication.
- To identify common unethical practices in healthcare promotions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

AUTHOR	TITLE	SOURCE	FINDINGS
Kotler P, Shalowitz J, Stevens RJ	Strategic Marketing for Health Care Organizations	Jossey-Bass, 2008	Ethical marketing should prioritize transparency, trust, and alignment with patient-centered care.
World Health Organization	Ethical Criteria for Medicinal Drug Promotion	WHO, 1988	Promotional messages must be evidence-based, non-deceptive, and aligned with public health standards.
American Medical Association	Code of Medical Ethics	AMA, 2023	Physicians must avoid misleading promotions and not exploit patient vulnerability.
Medical Council of India	Code of Ethics Regulations	MCI, 2002	Doctors are banned from advertising, promising guaranteed results, or endorsing commercial products.
Deshpande R	Ethical Issues in Indian Health Marketing	Indian J Med Ethics, 2022	Healthcare ads in India often use emotional manipulation and unverifiable claims, especially in AYUSH sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gupta R, et al.	Public Health Literacy in Urban India	Health Promot Int, 2020	Urban consumers have limited ability to judge ad credibility due to poor health and digital literacy.
ASCI	Annual Complaints Report	ASCI, 2023	Health-related ads faced a 35% rise in complaints due to false claims and unregulated influencer content.
AHMP India Foundation	Annual Report	AHMP, 2023	AHMP provides structured training in ethical health communication and promotes awareness in youth.
Singh P, et al.	The Influence of Social Media on Hospital Reputation	Health Market Rev, 2021	Hospitals using ethical digital engagement build stronger public trust, especially among younger patients.



ROLE OF AHMP INDIA FOUNDATION



- **Capacity-building workshops** — Trains students, marketers, and professionals in ethical healthcare communication.
- **AHMPCON annual conferences** — Provides a national platform for dialogue on ethical marketing challenges and solutions.
- **Digital outreach programs** — Promotes ethical marketing values through social media campaigns and webinars.
- **Internships and student engagement** — Builds early awareness and skills in ethical promotion among future healthcare leaders.
- **Collaborations with institutions** — Partners with universities and healthcare bodies to promote ethics in training programs.
- **Grassroots public awareness campaigns** — Educates communities on spotting misleading ads and valuing ethical communication

METHODOLOGY



Study Design:

- Cross-sectional mixed-method (quantitative + qualitative) study

Study Location:

- Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Study Duration:

- March – May 2025



Study Population

- Healthcare professionals,
- Students
- AHMP members
- Healthcare consumers

Sampling Technique

- Purposive sampling
- 145 participants for the quantitative survey (via Google Forms)
- 16 participants provided qualitative, narrative-type responses through open-ended questions

METHODOLOGY



Data Collection

- Google Forms survey with multiple-choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions.
- Captured demographics, awareness, and perceptions.
- No face-to-face interaction; fully digital and convenient.



Data Analysis

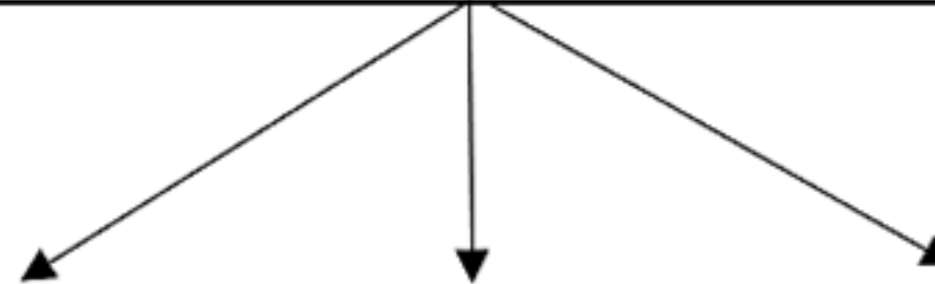
- Quantitative: Excel + SPSS (descriptive stats, chi-square, Spearman's correlation).
- Qualitative: Manual thematic coding of open-ended responses.

Ethical Considerations

- Digital informed consent
- Anonymity and voluntary participation

■ QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Ethical Healthcare Marketing &
AHMP India



Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3
Ethical Dissonance between market & care.	Trust through transparency in AHMP's communication.	Shaping ethical literacy among future leaders
↓		
Over-promising ads Conflict with patient care Commercial over ethics	Non-biased education Culturally sensitive Community trust-building	Gap in curriculum AHMP fills learning void Inspires ethical thinking

■ QUALITATIVE FINDINGS



Ethical dissonance

Participants noted a gap between commercial healthcare marketing tactics and true patient-centered care.



Mistrust from misleading ads

Exaggerated claims and fear-based promotions influenced unnecessary or harmful health decisions.



AHMP as an ethical model

AHMP was praised for transparent, evidence-based communication and ethical outreach.



Need for ethical literacy

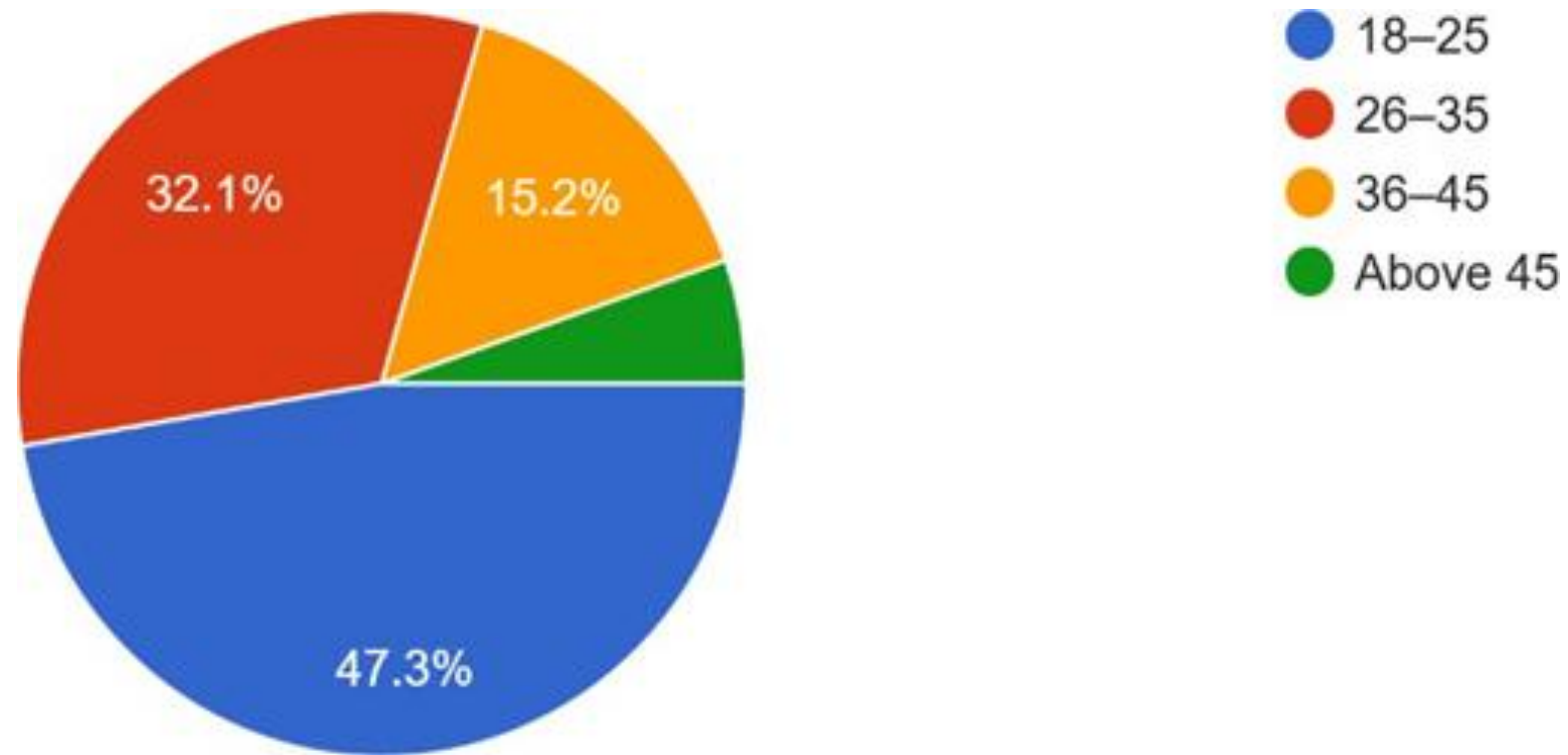
Respondents highlighted a lack of ethics education in medical and management training, valuing AHMP's initiatives.



trust
transparency
ethics

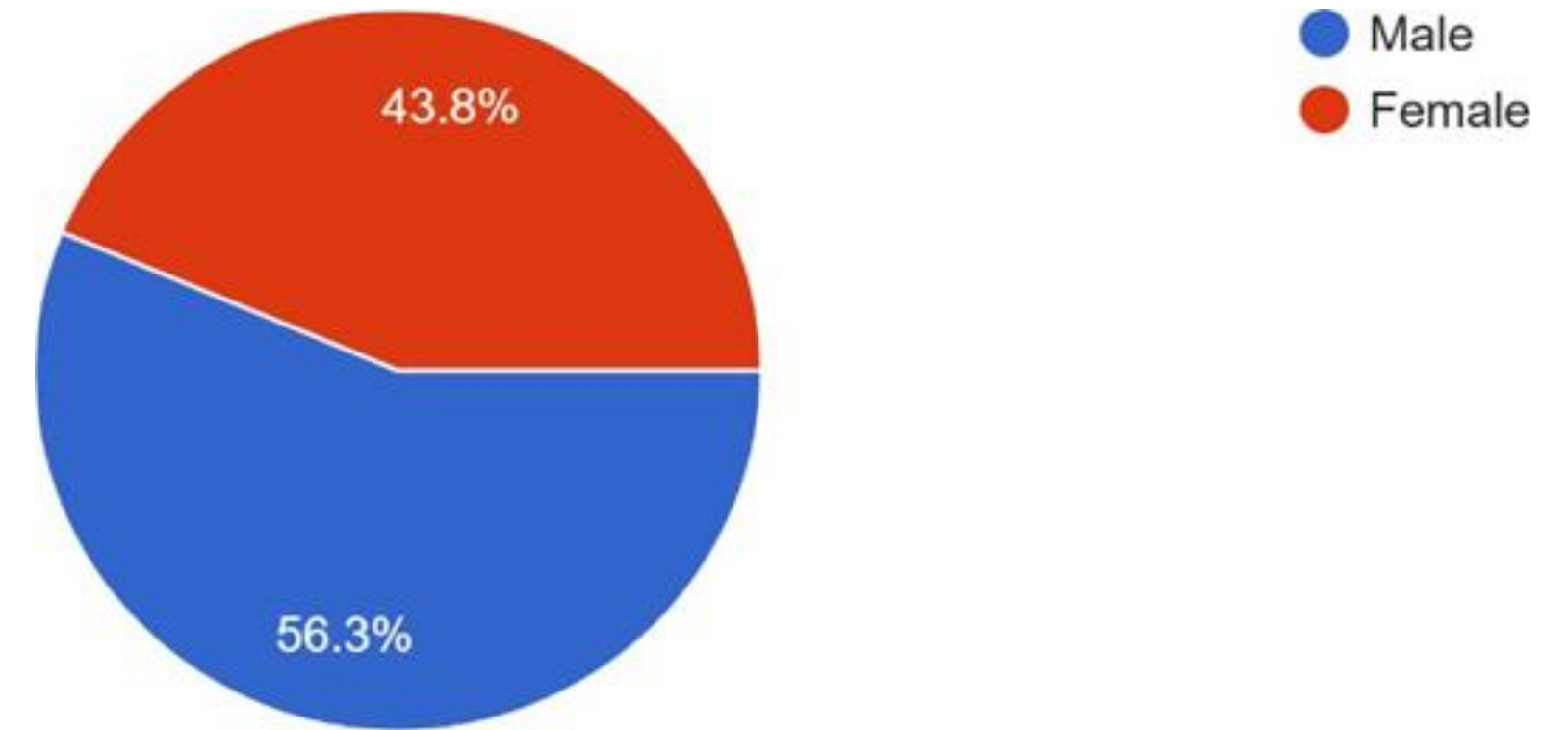
QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



• AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS

47.3% of respondents were aged 18–25 and 32.1% were 26–35, indicating that the study mainly reflects views of younger, digitally engaged participants.



• GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

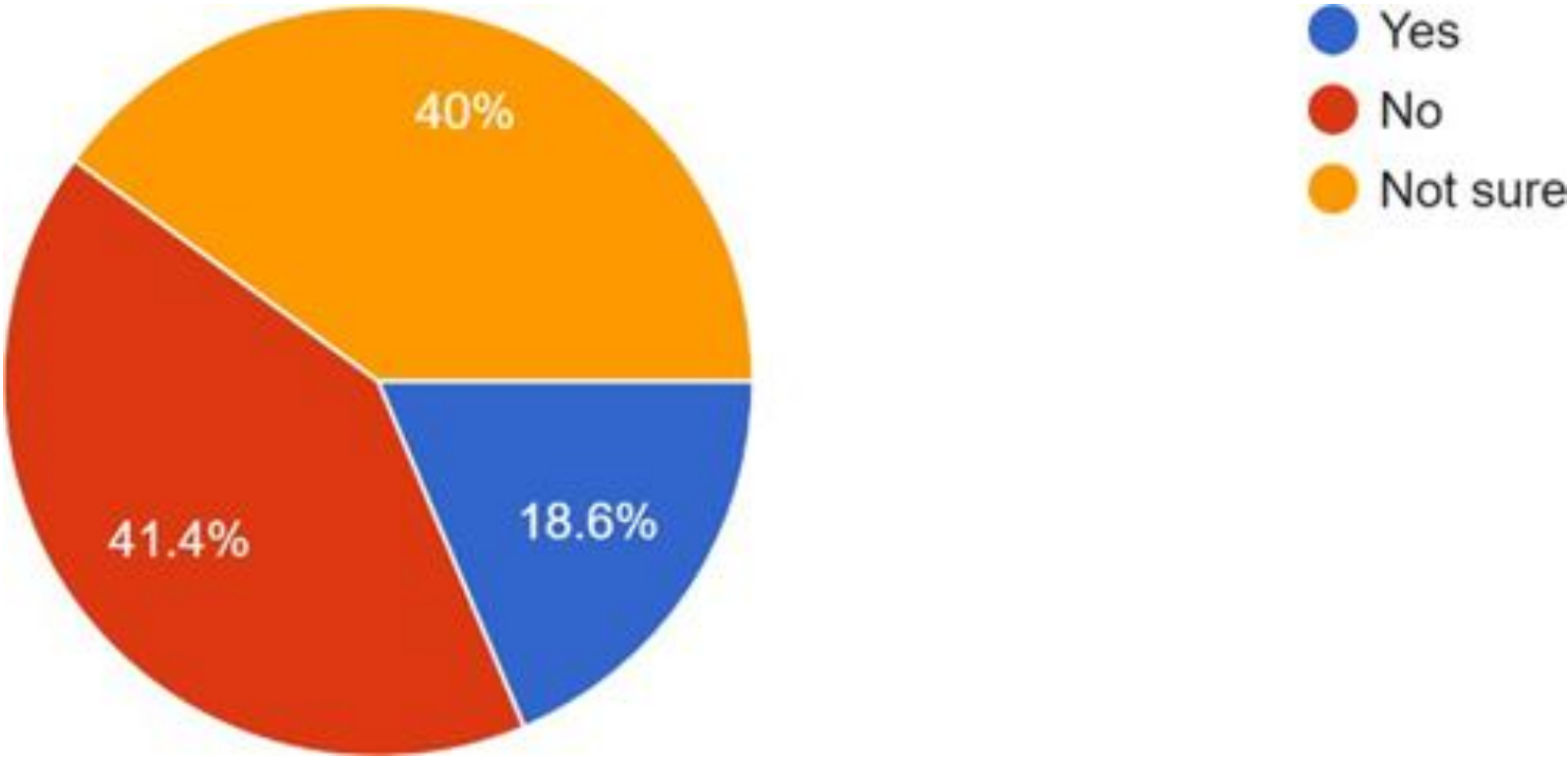
56.3% male and 43.8% female respondents — showing a fairly balanced gender distribution and gender-inclusive insights on ethical healthcare marketing.

• PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

33% general public, 32.1% students/interns, and 7.1% doctors — showing results reflect broad consumer and early-career views rather than expert-only opinions.

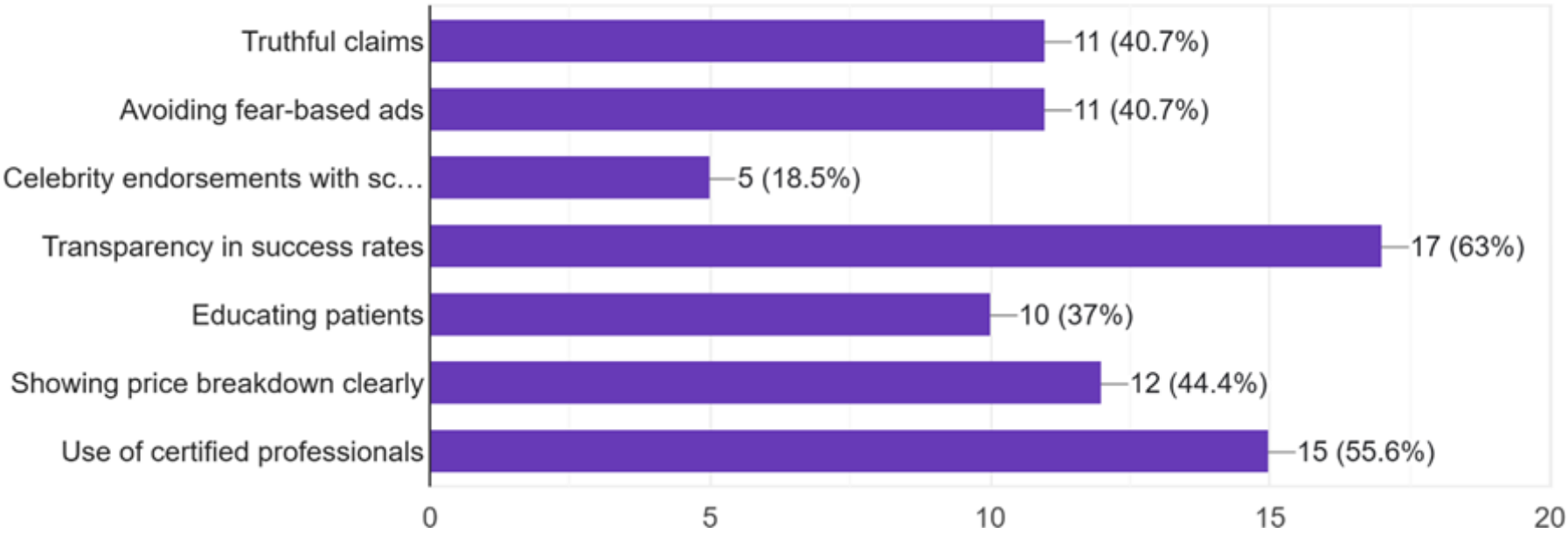
QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

AWARENESS AND PERCEPTIONS



- **AWARENESS OF THE TERM "ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING"**

Only 18.6% of respondents were aware of the term, highlighting a major awareness gap across the sample.



- **PERCEPTIONS OF ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING**

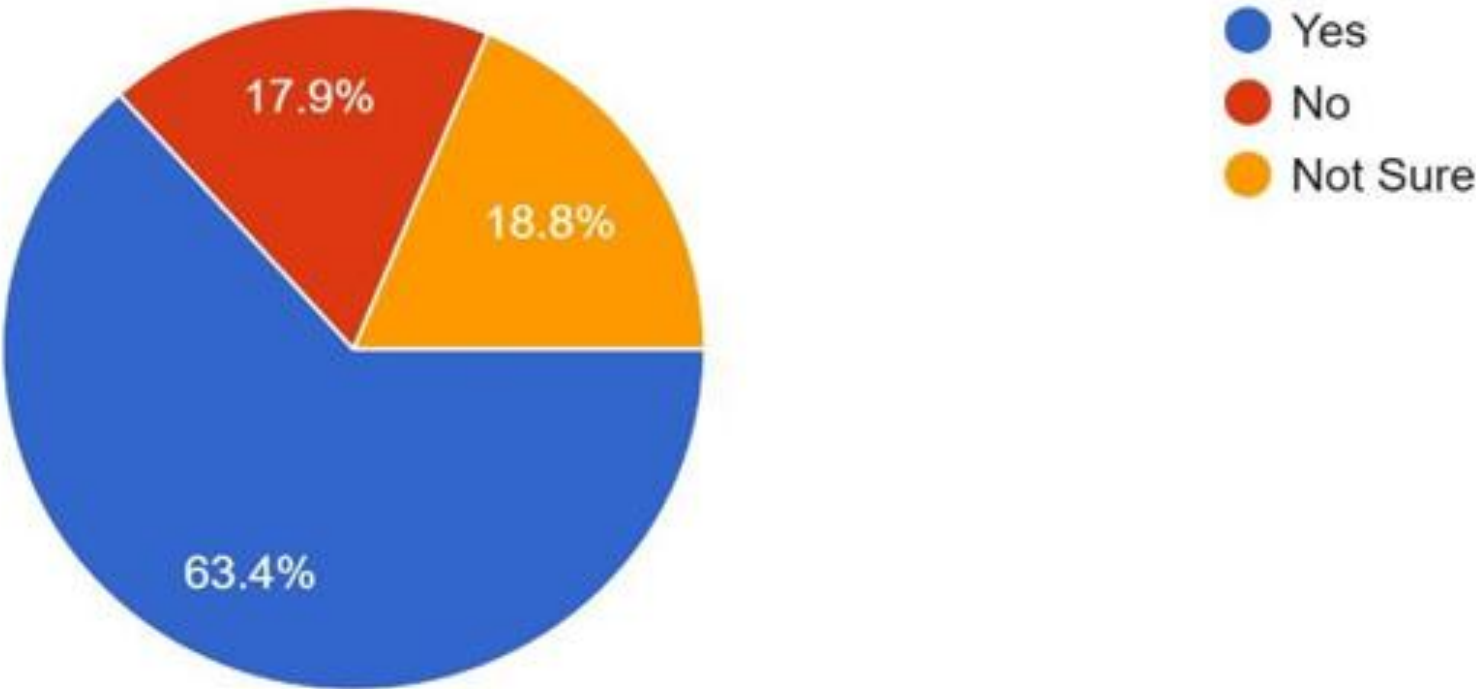
Respondents linked ethical healthcare marketing mainly with transparency, certified professionals, and fair pricing, placing least value on celebrity endorsements.

- **INTERESTED IN LEARNING ABOUT ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING**

Around half the respondents showed clear interest in learning about ethical healthcare marketing, indicating strong potential if awareness efforts are improved.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

EXPOSURE TO HEALTHCARE PROMOTIONS

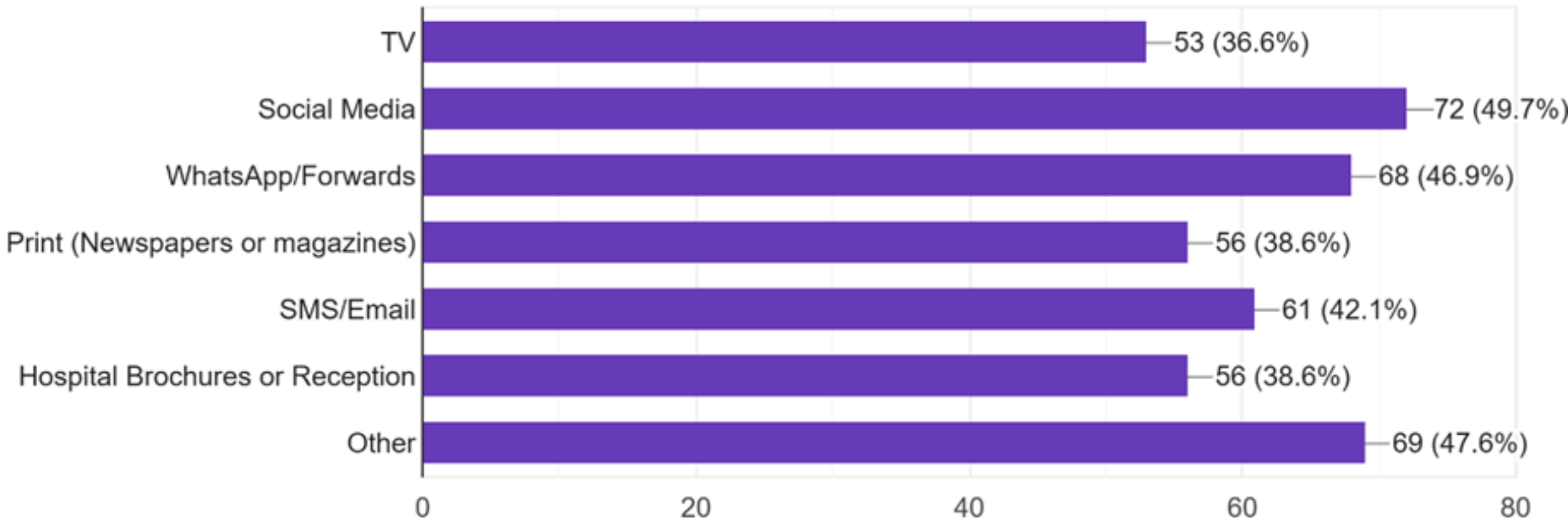


- EXPOSURE TO MISLEADING OR EXAGGERATED HEALTHCARE ADS

63.4% reported exposure to misleading ads, highlighting widespread unethical practices that risk eroding consumer trust and affecting health choice

On which platforms have you frequently seen healthcare-related promotions?

145 responses

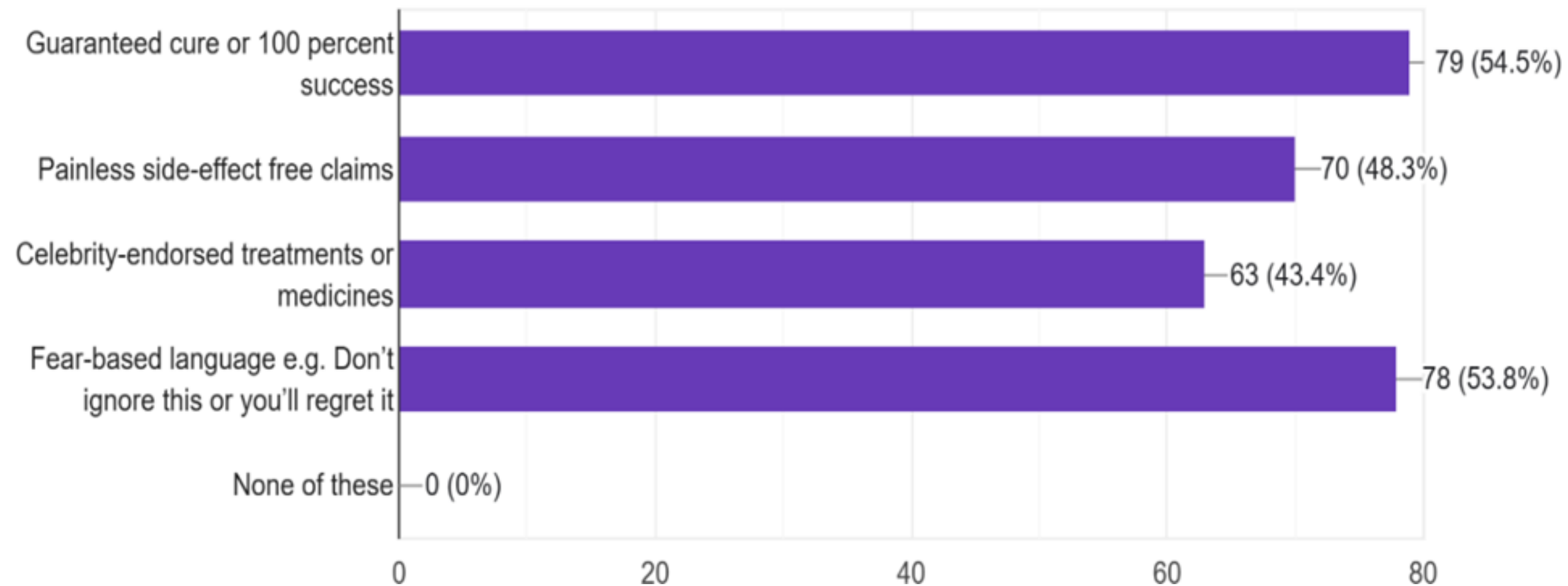


- COMMON PLATFORMS FOR HEALTHCARE-RELATED PROMOTIONS

Respondents linked ethical healthcare marketing mainly with transparency, certified professionals, and fair pricing, placing least value on celebrity endorsements.

■ QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

EXPOSURE TO HEALTHCARE PROMOTIONS



• PREVALENCE OF MISLEADING ELEMENTS IN HEALTHCARE ADS

Over half of respondents saw guaranteed cure (54.5%) and fear-based (53.8%) claims, underlining the widespread need for stricter ethical oversight in healthcare ads, Also half of respondents felt healthcare ads drive unverified actions and emotional manipulation, reinforcing the need for ethical marketing practices.



QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

STATISTICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Variable1	Variable2	Test Used	Result Summary
AHMP Affiliation	Awareness of Ethical Marketing	Chi-square	Significant association (p<0.05)
Age Group	Marketing Exposure Medium	Chi-square	Significant association (p<0.05)
Exposure to Misleading Ads	Trust in Healthcare	Spearman’s	Moderate correlation (ρ =0.46, p<0.01)
Awareness of Ethical Marketing	Interest in Learning More	Chi-square	Significant association (p<0.05)

DISCUSSION

- **Awareness gap:** Less than 1 in 5 participants knew about ethical healthcare marketing, pointing to the need for widespread sensitization.
- **Prevalence of unethical practices:** High exposure to misleading ads (63.4%) and deceptive claims (e.g., guaranteed cures) reflects major ethical lapses.
- **Positive role of AHMP:** AHMP was recognized as a trusted model for ethical, transparent healthcare communication.
- **Need for ethical literacy:** Respondents emphasized incorporating ethical marketing in medical and management training.
- **Call for stronger regulation:** Findings highlight the urgent need for stricter oversight, especially for digital and social media healthcare promotions.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSION

- The study reveals major gaps in awareness of ethical healthcare marketing.
- Unethical practices, especially in digital platforms, undermine public trust.
- AHMP India Foundation demonstrates a replicable model for ethical communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand awareness campaigns through conferences, workshops, and digital outreach.
- Integrate ethics into curricula for medical, dental, nursing, and health management students.
- Strengthen regulatory oversight on healthcare advertising, particularly on social media.



THANK YOU

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