

SYNOPSIS

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ETHICAL HEALTHCARE MARKETING: INSIGHTS FROM AHMP INDIA FOUNDATION

1. Background and Rationale

In the rapidly changing healthcare scenario of India, marketing has become an important factor in patient engagement and institutional exposure. Along with this change, however, has come ethical pitfalls in the form of over-the-top claims, deceptive ads, and emotionally evocative communication. The meeting of healthcare service provision and commercial promotion poses a critical question: how to ensure honesty, transparency, and patient-focused marketing of healthcare services.

Even with regulatory agencies such as the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI), the National Medical Commission (NMC), and legislations such as the Consumer Protection Act and the Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, enforcement of ethical marketing is uneven. In response to this, organizations such as AHMP India Foundation have come forward to foster awareness, capacity building, and ethical narration in health communications.

This study seeks to evaluate the current level of awareness, challenges, and scope of ethical healthcare marketing, particularly assessing the role and impact of AHMP India Foundation in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

2. Objectives

Primary Objective:

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

Secondary Objectives:

- To assess the awareness and perceptions of healthcare professionals, students, and consumers towards ethical healthcare marketing.
- To examine the role of AHMP India Foundation in promoting ethical marketing practices.
- To identify common unethical elements in healthcare promotions.
- To suggest frameworks for improving awareness and implementation of ethical marketing through training and institutional strategies.

3. Methodology

Study Design:

Cross-sectional mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative (structured questionnaire survey) and qualitative (open-ended responses and interviews) approaches.

Study Duration and Location:

March to May 2025, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Study Population:

- Healthcare professionals (doctors, administrators, marketers)
- Medical and healthcare management students
- General public and healthcare consumers
- AHMP India Foundation affiliates

Sample Size and Sampling Technique:

Quantitative: 145 respondents via purposive sampling using Google Forms.

Qualitative: 16 respondents providing in-depth narrative responses.

Data Collection Tools:

- Structured online questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions.
- Manual thematic analysis for qualitative data.
- Microsoft Excel and SPSS for quantitative analysis, including chi-square and Spearman's correlation tests.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Participants aged above 18 years with exposure to healthcare marketing.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Incomplete or duplicate responses and those who did not give consent.

Ethical Considerations:

- Informed consent obtained digitally.
- Anonymity and confidentiality maintained throughout the study.

4. Key Findings**Quantitative Highlights:**

- Only 18.6% were aware of the term ethical healthcare marketing.
- 63.4% had seen misleading healthcare advertisements.
- Significant associations were found between AHMP affiliation and awareness ($p < 0.01$), age and medium of ad exposure ($p < 0.05$), and exposure to misleading ads and trust ($p = 0.46$).
- Most respondents accessed healthcare promotions via social media and WhatsApp.

Qualitative Themes:

- Ethical Dissonance Between Marketing and Care
- Trust Through Transparency – The AHMP Model
- Shaping Ethical Literacy Among Future Leaders

5. Conclusion

The study highlights the pressing challenges in India's healthcare marketing landscape—mainly low public awareness, high exposure to misleading advertisements, and a deficit in trust. However, there is strong interest among youth and professionals in learning about ethical marketing. AHMP India Foundation plays a promising role and can serve as a model through its transparent, inclusive, and grassroots-level outreach strategies.

6. Recommendations

- Expansion of Ethical Marketing Conferences (e.g., AHMPCON)
- Integration of Ethical Marketing Modules in Medical and Management Curricula
- Public Awareness Workshops and Digital Campaigns via AHMP
- These efforts could bridge the ethical gaps in India's healthcare marketing ecosystem and foster long-term systemic reform.

7. References