



## GENERAL AWARENESS AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES TOWARDS GENERIC DRUGS : EXTENSIVE REVIEW ON LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

*To take care of health , it is essential to get the proper and effective treatment at affordable cost. And it is responsibility of the government that every single citizen should get medication at affordable cost. So to provide the common man of society government is promoting reduced cost of medication. Though the government has decided implementation of cheaper generic medicines to prescribe by medical practitioner ,there is less awareness about the use of generic medicines among the doctors and patients. The authors reviewed four research literature on various issues regarding prescription of generic drugs. The literature describes study regarding awareness and use of generic drugs in various region of India as well in other country. The study described various dimensions about awareness of generic drugs and promotional activities supported by the government. The authors concluded that there is requirement to develop a legal policy with regard to give assurance about the safety, quality ,manufacturing standards of generic medicines. The practitioner should be imparted education regarding the use of generic medicines. So that the common man could decrease the out-of-pocket payment for medical*

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*treatment. The patient can sustain within the costly branded medicines. To continue with the treatment of chronic diseases, generic medicines help at some extent to reduce the cost.*

**Keywords:** Generic medicines, Safety, Efficacy,

## **Introduction**

“The first step toward change is awareness. The second step is acceptance.”

Nathaniel Branden

There is nothing permanent as the change itself in life. There is always change in every steps of life. But to accept the change it is very essential to be aware about each and every aspect. So awareness and acceptance are the both sides of single coin. This implies in every aspect of life. Health is one of the most important characteristic of human life. To take care of health today, three percent of income is expended on general treatment throughout the life. But in case of chronic diseases it is becoming very difficult to maintain the expenditure on treatment. So to reduce the cost of treatment Generic drugs are became in existence. The above statement is applicable to generic drugs as there is need to create awareness about the use of generics in society.

Nowadays it has been observed though generic drugs are available in the market with affordable price having the same potential as that of branded drugs despite people (patients) are not aware about the same. It is said that clap is not by one hand means to say doctor also not prescribing generic drugs, hence in order to aware common people about the use of generic drugs, the government is trying to promote generic drugs through various activities. As there is very less expenditure on healthcare by common people, it is necessary to take the second step of acceptance of generic drug by the people of society. Hence there should be initiative steps to create awareness about the use of generics amongst outpatients, medical professionals and pharmacists and it is sine-quo-non. Due to lack of awareness, people are not taking the required dose of medication and the health of nation is becoming weak.

## Need of the study:

As it is becoming essential to study about the use of generics, amongst the people, doctors and pharmacists there should be proper review about the topic. As the study is the combination of medical healthcare system and management , there are less research articles are available in this field .So it is the need of time , to focus the available research literatures and find out the way it has been presented. To find out the research gap between the literatures published within last five years, the study has been done.

## What are Generic Medicines?

Generic medicines are those where the original patent has expired and which may now be produced by manufacturers other than the original innovator (patent-holding) company. The term “generic drug”<sup>a</sup> or “generic medicine” can have varying definitions in different markets, however the term is commonly understood, as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), to mean a pharmaceutical product which:

- is usually intended to be interchangeable with an innovator product,
- is manufactured without a license from the innovator company, and
- is marketed after the expiry date of the patent or other exclusive rights [1].

There are differing legal requirements in different jurisdictions that define the specifics of what a generic medicine is. However, one of the main principles underpinning the safe and effective use of generic medicines is the concept of bioequivalence.

Bioequivalence has been defined as follows: *two pharmaceutical products are bioequivalent if they are pharmaceutically equivalent and their bioavailability (rate and extent of availability) after administration in the same molar dose are similar to such a degree that their effects, with respect to both efficacy and safety, can be expected to be essentially the same. Pharmaceutical equivalence implies the same amount of the same active substance(s), in the same dosage form, for the same route of administration and meeting the same or comparable standards*[2].

## **Objectives of the study:**

The objective of this paper is to review extensively about general awareness and promotional activities towards generic drugs in the literature. Also to conclude the factors that encourage the use and acceptance of generic drugs.

## **Methodology:**

To analyze the given objectives , the secondary research method is used. The literature search was performed from last five years Jan 2012 to Jan 2017to identify published studies on the views of physicians, pharmacists and people on generic drugs. An extensive literature search was performed to identify published studies related to general awareness , promotional activities of generic medicines.

## **Conceptual Analysis:**

**Proteesh Rana\*, Vandana Roy(2015), “ Generic medicines : issues and relevance for global health** “has reviewed on the regulatory issues about generic drugs industries. In this literature the authors described the extent use of generic medicines. These medicines shows economic advantages over branded medicines. In their article ,they reviewed issues related to the use of generic medicines namely cost and affordability, legal regulations ,quality and the use of generic medicines by the prescriber and patients.

Cost and affordability described various dimensions of generic medicines. If the patient is having chronic disease ,he has to take long-term treatment. Reduced cost generic medicines helps the patients to stick with the long term treatment. Raised consumption of generic medicines could meet the expense of treatment without compromising on healthcare expenditure.

Legal issues : The authors had come up with legal regulations which deals with the concept of Trade Related Aspect of Intellectual property Rights ( TRIPS ) .It has some essential provisions such as patent term extension ,data exclusivity, patent linkage , compulsory licenses and parallel import policy.

Quality issues: Authors had collected some important causes for perception regarding quality of generics are as follows : a) Lack of good manufacturing practices b) Bioequivalence testing

and interchangeability of generic medicines. c) Laboratory and clinical variability d) Generic substitution for medicines.

Use issues: Physician perception, patient perception

The authors concluded their research with cost affording generic medicines instead of branded drugs. The quality and legal issues with generic medicines need to be reported to enhance the use of generic medicines. The policy should be designed in such a way that the generic manufacturer should give assurance about the quality of generic medicines. The policymakers should create awareness among patients about the use of generic medicines and should motivate prescribers to prescribe cost affording generic medicines for patients.

### **Perception and attitude of general practitioners regarding generic medicines in Karachi Pakistan: A questionnaire based study**

Shazia Qasim Jams hed , Mohamed Izham Mohamed Ibrahim, Mohamed Azmi Ahmad Hassali, Imran Masood, Bee Yean Low, Asrul Akmal Shafie and Zaheer-ud-din babar(2015)

Numerous studies has been conducted world-widely to explore views, attitudes, perception of doctors regarding prescription of generic medicines. With quantitative analysis , the authors identified that there were gaps in the knowledge and use of generic medicines among doctors. They observed misinterpretation about the safety, quality and therapeutic effect of generic medicines. So the authors has suggested a module on Policy Awareness Interactive Discussion (PAID) as curricular innovation. It should make available basic information on health policy, pharmaceutical policy ,essential drug list, innovators and generic medicines and their availability and their affordability. The authors found good perceptions and attitudes in their study. They found the lacking factors also such as lack of quality in generic medicines and mistrust in local manufacturing regarding prescription of generic medicines. The authors concluded that for better understanding and awareness of generic medicines among practitioners , they must be well-informed about the quality ,therapeutic effectiveness and safety standards of generic medicines. It is the need of society that every citizen should get quality medication with economically affording medicines.

### **Gauri Billa , Karan Thakkar, Sarita Jaiswar, Dinesh Dhodi (Feb 2014) “ Across-sectional study to evaluate the awareness and attitudes of physicians towards reducing the cost of**

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**prescription drugs Mumbai** ”conducted a cross sectional , questionnaire based , observational study to evaluate the awareness and attitude towards low cost generic drugs. The authors reported a study over a period of three months among two hundred physicians , at Grant Medical College and Sir J J Group of Hospitals, Mumbai . The authors followed STROBE ( Strengthening The Reporting of Observational Studies in a Epidemiology) .

They found in their analysis that ninety seven percent of government doctors and seventy two percent of private doctors were having cost consideration as an important factor while prescribing medicines to patients. Also they found that sixty four percent of government doctors and ten percent of private doctors were ready to give approval for stepwise introduction of generic drugs. In their evaluation , they analyzed that only twenty percent of government doctors and ten percent pf private doctors were ready to use generic medicines.

Finally they had drawn conclusion that more awareness to be created about the use of generic medicines. For the actual and practical implementation of use of generic medicines ,government has to play an essential role. Thus government should construct policies to make availability of cheaper generic medicines.

**“A survey evaluating consumer’s knowledge, perception, awareness and preparedness about generic medicines in Urban Central Gujarat region”. -Krishnani T K ,Patel Vipul P.(May 2017)**

The authors investigated a questionnaire based study to understand what precisely consumers think about generic medicines i.e. quality, awareness and preparedness etc. The results indicated that consumers were not so perfect and assured about these traits with regard to generic medicines although they are facing the costly branded medicines.

The authors evaluated the analysis by forming questionnaire based exploratory investigation. They analyzed that many faced the problem of higher cost medicines, hence they were not able to take complete dose of medication. They were not sure and confident about the quality and efficacy of generic medicines. The doctors never asked the patients about their financial capacity whether they could afford branded medicines or not. The authors found positive hopes about increasing the level of awareness and knowledge about generic medicines among the urban customers. As the government is promoting through promotional activities such as Television,

Social Media and newspaper about the use of generic medicines among the people , consumers welcomed the demand for generic medicines. The authors concluded that the cheaper generic medicines decreasing the out-of-pocket payment. To make available generic medicines doctor is the key person between the company and consumer .He can only break the wall of lack of awareness among the patients by prescribing low-cost generic medicines. There is need to form legal provision by government and that can only bring the change.

### **Conclusion:**

The generic drugs are playing essential role in reducing the healthcare cost. Though, uncertainties still occur regarding the safety and efficiency of generic medicines. To increase the awareness and use of generic medicines ,the doctors need to be educated and comforted about the manufacturing process ,approval system of generic drugs, their bioequivalence ,safety and quality as compared with branded medicines.An organized work and strategy should also be embraced to implement the practice of generic medicines prescribing by practitioner.The government is insisting all the medical practitioners to prescribe low –cost generic medicines to the patients.All these issues required to be addressed for the awareness of the factual advantages of generic medicines as part of nation’s purchasing power parity.As well as there is a need to develop firm policy regarding safety and efficacy of generic medicines.

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