



Review Article

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Pharmaceutical Companies towards Health Care

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ABSTRACT

In India, health promotion is very relevant. Many factors like, food consumption patterns, demographic, socio-economic conditions, cultural and political changes determine health and social well being in the country. Public health care problems are due to rapid urbanisation, unhealthy dietary patterns, and unprecedented rise of communicable and non-communicable chronic diseases, globalisation, financial instability, natural disasters etc. The paper presents various strategies of pharmaceutical companies to promote medicines for a better public health care and disease management systems.

Keywords: Health promotion, pharmaceutical, public health care

INTRODUCTION

The total expenditure on health care is 3.8 per cent of the GDP in 2012. Among 1,00,000 population the standardised mortality rate by cause of communicable diseases is 253, non-communicable diseases 682 and through injuries is 116 as per WHO 2015 report. Therefore, in the country health education and health promotion need to be strengthened in order to decrease the mortality rate. Health education is about enabling individuals to adopt healthy behaviours voluntarily by providing health information and knowledge to individuals and communities whereas; health promotion a comprehensive approach involves various players in promoting health.

Definition

Health Promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health (WHO, 2016).

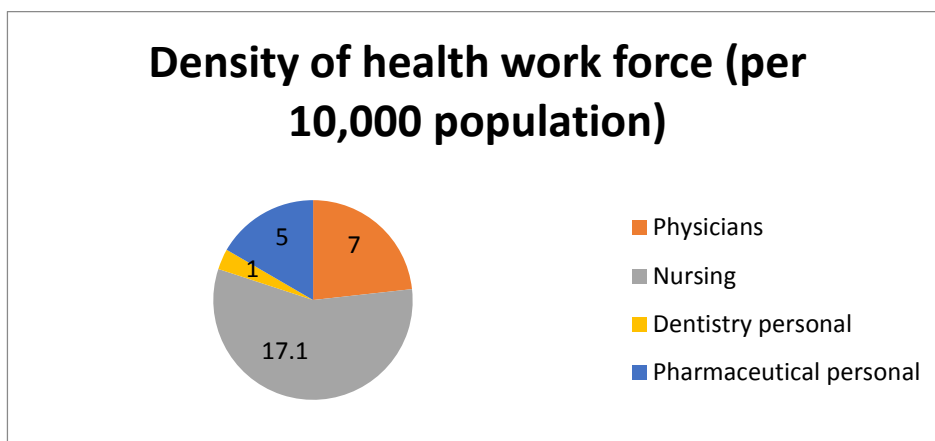


Figure 1 WHO 2015 report

Pharmaceutical Industry in Promotion of Health

Pharmaceuticals Industry is one of the key elements that can build an effective health care system in the community. The Industry is directly responsible for the well being of the population as well for economic prosperity. Both health care and pharmaceutical sectors in India are witnessing significant growth in terms of revenue due to large population growth, rapid rise of middle class incomes and growing consciousness towards health. Indian Pharmaceutical sector comprise of producers, distributors, drugs and other medical products whereas health care sector comprise of research and development, hospitals (large or mid-size), medical equipment and devices, medical insurance and outsourcing, health tourism etc.

Pharmaceutical Marketing in Health care: Pharmaceutical marketing is about promoting a drug to the end-user that in return helps to raise awareness about treatments to especially chronic diseases. The number of deaths can be brought down through effective promotion of drugs to the physicians and pharmacists; as they play an important role in the delivery chain.

Physicians consider the efforts of pharmaceutical representatives to be useful in understanding the latest drugs and treatments, drug interactions, drug side effects and in answering their doubts over the information provided.

Strategies of pharmaceutical companies in betterment of health care

1 Drug Development and Management

New medicines are hope for patients suffering with diseases. The Indian pharmaceutical companies need to prevent diseases and save lives of patients with improving health. New drugs help to cut the costs involved in health care and reduces overall sick days.



Pharmaceutical research can move with different kinds of new products. Innovation can range from radical to incremental product modifications. The new products can be categorised as to the new to the world product which are new to manufacturer as well as to the market price on which a patent can be applied. The other category is called line extension, are the products new to the market not to the company. Also pharma companies can go for manufacturing me-too products that are new to the company but not to the market place. These innovations do have an advantage of bringing safety, efficacy, productivity, competitiveness and market share.

2 Access to generic drugs

Generic drugs do have the same composition as branded drugs. India is a global leader in generic drug markets. The generic drugs are exported to other developing countries more than in the country because the physicians and pharmacists still promote the use of branded drugs to the patients because of many factors like misconception of generic drug i.e. in terms of quality and safety, unqualified pharmacists, illicit medical practices and the relationship end doctor and pharmacists carry with big pharmaceutical companies.

Promotion of generics in the country can happen through:

- By imparting confidence in consumers regarding the use of generic drugs.
- By instructing Medical Council of India and Pharmacy Council to prescribe generic drugs.
- By strengthening Jan Ausadi Scheme.
- By reducing illicit medical practices.
- By creating awareness to the public towards the low cost therapies implemented across the world due to aging population.

3 Disease Management Programs need to be designed in improving quality of life of patients suffering especially from chronic diseases. These programs empower individuals in better management and prevention of complications that arise from diseases. The pharmaceutical companies need to support these programs as to improve the overall health of patient. The role of pharmacist and doctor is usually important in educating and monitoring the medication.

4 Strengthening distribution: Supply chain in a country like India is complex. The quality of drug could be improved by bringing changes in the drug distribution system. The ingredients of the medicines are sourced from different countries then formulations are packaged so that the sale can happen in the country as well exported. The drugs has

an opportunity to substituted with substandard products as before they reach the patient it is handled by many others for many times.

Growth in type and volume of drugs, globalisation in pharma logistics, and increased vigilance over industry with strict regulations are the major driving forces to bring change in pharma distribution. The industry need to primarily focus on inventory visibility through effective management of supply chain i.e. quick identification, verification and control of situations. Also, there is a need to focus on storage and shipment of pharmaceutical products and redesign of the distribution network.

5 Expertise health care practitioners

The contribution of practitioners especially, physicians and pharmacists to health care is based, upon a body of knowledge and expertise acquired from a university degree education, followed by a formally designated period of supervised practical experience. Students need to acquire a broad understanding of the scientific principles and techniques of the pharmaceutical sciences and be able to keep pace throughout their careers with developments in medicine and pharmacy. Their knowledge and expertise extends to all aspects of the preparation, distribution, action and uses of drugs and medicines, and they should have acquired sufficient scientific discipline of mind to enable them to be efficient self-learners and to benefit from continuing education, as well as to enable those who wish to continue their studies to undertake postgraduate training or research.

6 Techniques in promoting medicines

Promotional activities recoup the costs of a new medicine. Promotion focuses on convincing physicians and other health care professionals to buy medicines. Promotion of new patented products ensures monopoly on sales. The direct to consumer advertising (DTCA) of prescription drugs is prohibited in India. In India promotion largely happened through the medical representative who often visits the physicians and provides free samples of the drugs to be promoted. But know the physician and patient preference channels have changed. They are adopting the upcoming discipline called 'digital health' which involves the use of information and communication technologies to address the problems and challenges faced by patients suffering from acute or chronic illness.

The patient preferred channels in getting a health care service are website/ online portals, e-mail, Smartphone apps, social media, local services etc.. The digital services are expected to grow among all the age groups as the places in the country are getting connected with internet. The adoption of digital services is to get patients accessible to better health, availability of the person, standardised system. The digital start ups in India in promoting quality health care are Practo, Portea medical, Lybrate, Doc Engage, Livhealth, Praxify, Qikwell etc.

7 Corporate social responsibility

In developing countries, every year millions of people die because of the infectious diseases. For majority of the diseases, treatment is available yet people die because of medicines being expensive. The pharmaceutical companies producing medicines need to build a health system adopting CSR practices especially in strengthening drug distribution system, pricing, patents, research and development and appropriate use of medicines like mhealth initiatives. Pharmaceutical industry is carefully watched for its practices by external stakeholders like media, NGOs, public etc. So the initiatives or the strategies designed should satisfy the stakeholders.

Multinational companies are taking CSR philosophy in bringing Access to healthcare Innovation Patient safety (drug safety monitoring and product quality), Ethics in R&D (clinical trials) Business ethics (responsible lobbying and responsible marketing) Human rights Health and safety in the workplace Diversity Workforce development Energy and carbon footprint Water management Pharmaceuticals in the environment.

CONCLUSION

The strategic factors like drug development and management, access to generic drugs, disease management programs, strengthening distribution, expertise health care practitioners, techniques in promoting medicines and corporate social responsibility are detailed then pharmaceutical companies, health care initiators and government can find the opportunities for growth and meet the challenges of the health care industry .

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