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Research Article

COMPARISON STUDIES BETWEEN STRATEGIES OF MARKETING OF PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING BEFORE LOCKDOWN AND AFTER LOCKDOWN IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT

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Abstract:

Drug companies rely on their marketing activities to influence physicians. The studies showed that the activities of pharmaceutical companies to manage physicians prescribing behavior in developed countries especially in my locality, However, very little studies investigated the impact of pharmaceutical marketing strategies on prescribing pattern in Dharmapuri district. The objective of this research was to examine and comparison between before and after lockdown, the drug companies' strategies on physicians' prescription behavior in Dharmapuri market concerning physicians' demographic variables quantitatively. Pandemic and lockdown situations effectively make change in the strategies pattern of marketing of pharmaceutical products.

Keyword: *Pharmaceutical Marketing, physicians, Marketing Strategies*

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INTRODUCTION:

Pharmaceutical marketing efforts directed to physicians are getting more and more attention over the years.^[1] There are many tactics adopted by pharmaceutical companies such as physician-targeted promotions which are free samples, journal advertisements, printed product literature and other gifts that helped them to increase the acceptability of their products.^[2] On average, pharmaceutical companies spent 20% or more of their sales on marketing which made them a lot of money, and they had little incentive to stop those tactics.^[3] It was estimated that 84% of pharmaceutical marketing efforts are directed toward physicians because from the manufacturer's point of view, physicians are the key decisionmakers, the gatekeepers to drug sales.^[4] The pandemic conditions make several differences in the strategies of pharmaceutical marketing of products.^[5] The structure of pharmaceutical markets differs from country to country because it has a national character. However, the pharmaceutical industry has an international nature.^[6]

The purpose of these theories was to help doctors and pharmaceutical companies' managers acquire insight into their beliefs about the many criticisms that were made against marketing and particularly, insight about where they stood on the morally difficult situations that confronted them and what actions they would take in response to them.^[7] In practical ethics, two concepts existed while making decisions: utilitarian and deontological. In utilitarian ethics, consequences justified the ways to achieve it, but in deontological ethics, duties were significant, and outcomes may not justify the means. Pharmaceutical marketing personalized to physicians such as the provision of samples and gifts raised such ethical issues.^[8] To make effective decisions, the key was to think about different choices regarding their ability to accomplish one of the physicians' most important goals that were ethical prescribing of drugs. Five ethical principles were identified as the cornerstone of the ethical guidelines, they helped to explain and to clarify the issues involved in a specific dilemma, and they were globally valuable to approach ethical and appropriate decision-making: beneficence, nonmaleficence, respect for autonomy, justice, and fidelity.^[9]

Physician prescribing pattern is a very wide concept including various dimensions. In this research, the focus was on the adoption of drugs. The process of

adoption often was referred to as the process of diffusion by which new ideas and products became adopted by society.^[10] An undeniable fact is that marketing efforts have a significant impact on physicians' decision to adopt and can initiate the process of diffusion. Pharmaceutical sales and pharmaceutical marketing analysts realized that the success of a brand depended mostly on the prescribing behavior (change to another brand) of the physician who is the most crucial target customer for the pharmaceutical enterprises.^[11] To remain profitable, monitoring the prescribing practice of each physician needed a suitable and successful relationship marketing program. The overall purpose of relationship marketing was to improve marketing productivity and enhance mutual value for the parties involved in the relationship. Consequently, instead of manipulating the customers (physicians) they were involved in the relationship.^[12]

RESEARCH AND RESULTS:

The research and survey which is conducted in Dharmapuri district by asking corresponding queries with 4 physicians and 20 peoples in Dharmapuri district. The questions based on the marketing strategies are below

- ❖ Direct to target customers
- ❖ Social media marketing
- ❖ Offer free samples to physicians
- ❖ Building relationship with physicians

Direct to target customers:

Direct to targeted customers is considered as one the effective strategy in pharmaceutical marketing of drugs. In this strategy, drug companies targeting the patients rather than physicians.

The direct to target customers get decreased as 15% from 38% due to lockdown conditions when compared to before lockdown conditions.

Social Media Marketing:

The social media marketing is increased as 22% from 11% due to the lockdown conditions when compared to before lockdown conditions. It happened mainly in accordance with the pandemic situations. Pandemic conditions make people closed inside their homes and it leads to make people more internet and social media addicted.

The difference is seemed to be nearer to 11% percentage.

Offer free samples:

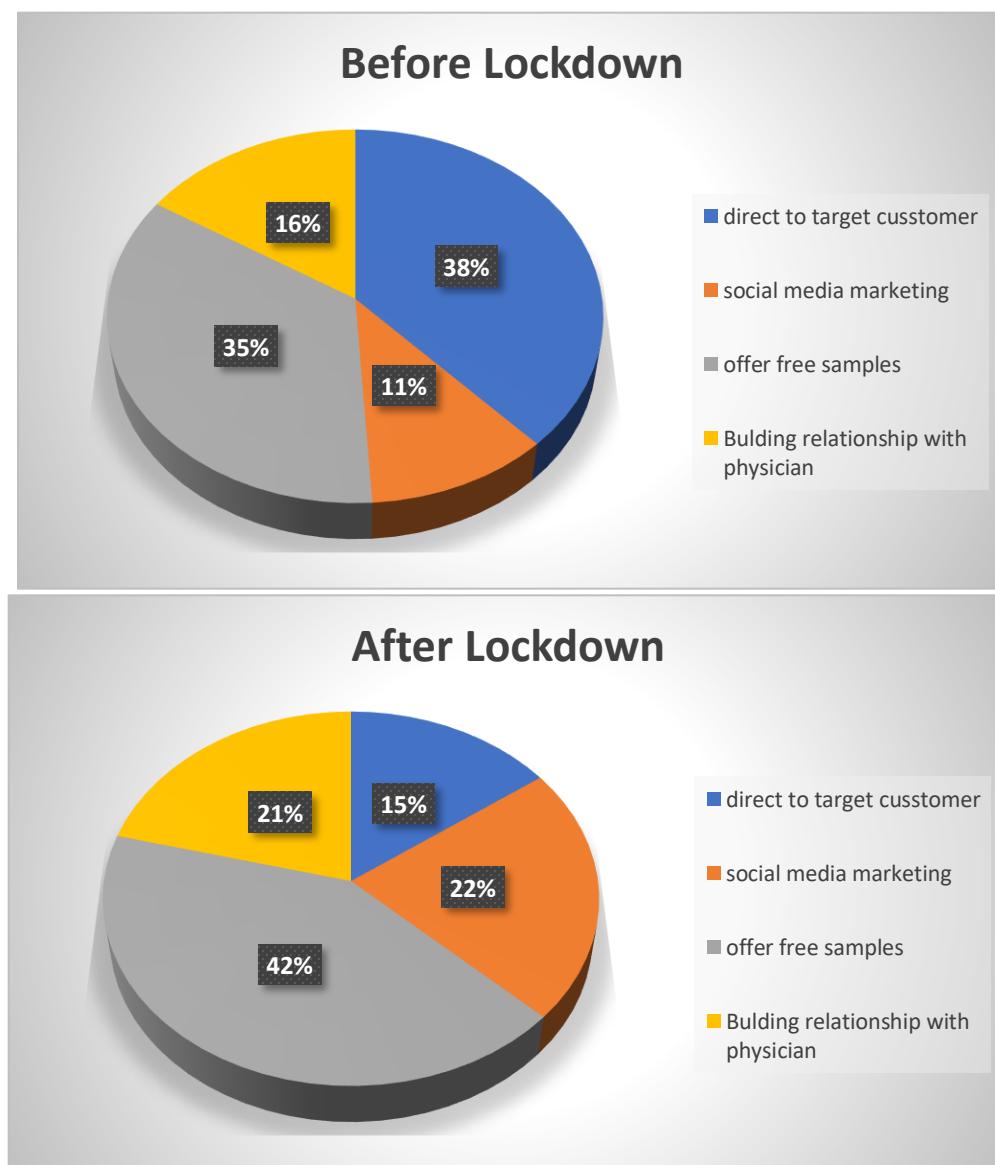
Offer free samples is increased as 42% from 35% due to the lockdown conditions when compared to before lockdown conditions. In this pandemic condition many new drugs get into the market and so the drug companies offering free samples to enlarge their marketing of product.

The difference is seemed to be nearer to 7% percentage.

Building relationship with physicians:

Building relationship with physicians is increased as 21% from 16% due to the lockdown conditions when compared to before lockdown conditions. Due to this pandemic condition, pharmaceutical companies can't able to reach the customers so, they need to build a relationship with the physicians to increase their protectivity.

The difference is seemed to be nearer to 5% percentage.



CONCLUSION:

Findings of this study provided an insightful work. From a managerial perspective, physician, and some of the people in my locality can use the research findings to design better their strategies directed to the physicians who can also benefit from the results obtained.

Most of the investigated physicians change their prescribing behaviour, and it can simply be concluded that prescribing pattern of physicians is negatively affected by promotion tactics due to the pandemic conditions. It can be concluded that the pharmaceutical marketers have to understand the real needs, beliefs, and behaviours of physicians towards their marketing and promotional tools which is suitable for the pandemic situations. Physician's opinion regarding ethical acceptability of gifts and samples are quite appropriate.

Physicians are the most substantial determinants in pharmaceutical sales by deciding which drug will be used by patients. Lockdown and pandemic conditions influencing the physician and pharmaceutical sales. My opinion on these strategic changes in the pharmaceutical marketing of products is that the pharmaceutical companies should understand the pandemic conditions and act suitable for that and work to maintain the standard people health.

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