



A Study Of the Role of Health Camps and Patient Awareness Programs as a Promotional Strategy in Pharmaceutical Brand Promotion

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Abstract: Life style diseases are on the rise globally and especially in India. There has been a major shift in disease pattern in India; it has been seen that life style diseases like diabetes, osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases, and hypertension are killing more Indians than communicable diseases. The main problems Indians are facing are the lack of awareness they have about the above mention diseases. Keeping the serious need in mind the medical practitioners across the country have taken a bold initiative in educating the masses about these diseases through health camps and patient awareness programs. However it becomes difficult for the concerned doctors to arrange for financial assistance for conducting the health camps and patient education programs. Many Indian pharmaceutical companies have seen this as an opportunity for brand promotion. They have allocated substantial budgets for either fully sponsoring the programs or provide free samples and other assistance for doctors conducting these camps. The present study tries to get insights of whether doctors appreciate the company's promotional strategy of sponsoring camps & patient education programs and whether they are willing to participate in the company sponsored camps and health care programs. The study also aims to find out whether company's promotional objectives of building favourable opinion about the brands thereby leading to brand recall and incremental sales are met by sponsoring such programs.

Keywords: Life Style diseases, diabetes, promotional strategy, brand promotion, camps, patient education programs.

I. INTRODUCTION

Life style diseases are on the rise globally and especially in India. There has been a major shift in the disease pattern in India; it has been found that lifestyle diseases like diabetes and hypertension are killing more Indians than communicable diseases.

World Health Organization (WHO) have pointed out that out of 10 deaths in India, eight are due to non-communicable disease (NCDs). With rapid economic development and urbanization and adopting to western culture the lifestyle diseases incidences have reached to alarming proportions.¹

Lifestyle diseases have emerged as bigger killers than infectious ones in Mumbai yet again. Heart ailments and heart attacks topped the BMC's list of top 10 killer diseases for 2011, the sixth consecutive year that they have occupied the slot²

Besides lifestyle diseases the patients suffering from osteoporosis is also increasing at alarming proportions.

In India the number of osteoporosis patients is approximately 26 million with the numbers projected to increase to 36 million by 2013. It is because of increase in life expectancy and populations. Another reason is that the peak incidence of osteoporosis in India is 50-60 years, as compared to 70-80 Years in the West.

The seriousness of the problem can be judged by the facts that Osteoporotic fractures are four times more common than strokes. 50 years old women have equal chance of dying from of complication of osteoporosis as from breast cancer.

The most alarming revelation is the existence of diabetic, hypertensive patients who go undetected till the disease strike them and hence there is a dire need to build awareness about the disease and the management of disease amongst the patients and the general population.

The main problem seen among Indians was the lack of awareness among the people about having regular health check-ups. Given the current lifestyles and changing environment it is important for people to undergo regular health check-ups.³



Keeping the serious need in mind many medical practitioners take the initiative to build awareness in the population by conducting free camps. Though some camps get assistance from NGOs and government aids many times it becomes difficult for the concerned doctors to conduct camps and patient awareness programs due to financial constraints.

Many pharmaceutical companies have taken this opportunity for brand promotion by partially or fully sponsoring these camps and patient awareness programs.

Diabetes and Hypertension detection camps: Free blood sugar tests are carried out by the doctors. The doctor's educate and advice the patient on the disease and the disease management by providing information, diets, exercise regimes free of cost.

The pharmaceutical companies sponsor these camps and provide free samples of diabetic medications, leaflets providing simple to understand information about the disease and disease management.

Osteoporosis detection camps: Here many companies invest heavily in purchasing Bone mass detection machines which are provided to doctors to conduct osteoporosis detection camps.

Sometimes hospitals are roped in to conduct such educational programs sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. Some programs sponsored by pharmaceutical companies are as follows:

- Patient awareness programmer on Diabetes.
- Pediatric Asthma programmer
- Patient education programmer on Hypertension
- Patient education programmer on Urinary Stone
- Patient awareness programmer on Menopause

The objectives of these camps and patient education programs are to develop goodwill amongst doctors thereby developing favorable opinion about the brand hence facilitating better brand recall and business.

Since a large amount of promotional budget is spent on promotional input such as patient education awareness programs and health camps it is imperative to know whether doctors appreciate health camps as a promotional input? Are they willing to participate in conducting such camps sponsored by companies? And do these health camps and patient education programs serve the purpose of facilitating favorable opinion about the brands and thereby brand recall. The present study tries to get insights of whether doctors appreciate the company's promotional strategy of sponsoring camps & patient education programs and whether they are willing to participate in the company sponsored camps and health care programs. The study also aims to find out whether company's promotional objectives of building favourable opinion about the brands thereby leading to brand recall and incremental sales are met by sponsoring such programs.

II. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

- To understand whether doctor find the company sponsored health camps and patient education program useful.
- To understand whether doctors are will to participate in the company sponsored health camps and patient education programs.
- To find out whether participation for doctors in the company sponsored health camps and patient education programs helps in better brand recall.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken was carried out primarily at three stages, namely:

- Secondary data collection: Newspaper, Magazines, Websites
- Questionnaire design
- Primary data collection:

Structured questionnaire administered on one to one basis and a live interview.

IV. SAMPLING DESIGN

Random sampling was carried out.



V. SAMPLE SIZE

The sample consists of 100 doctors from Mumbai city & suburbs

VI. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Collected data was edited for avoiding unwanted error & was arranged in order and sequence. The data obtained .The statistical software such as SPSS was used wherever necessary. Suitable statistical methods were used was then coded and classified for further process by preparing tables, graphs, charts and pie – diagrams for testing hypotheses & analyzing the data. Please refer the charts in annexure for detail data analysis.

VII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is limited to Mumbai city & suburbs only
- The sample size does not give a clear representation of the total universe.

VIII. MAJOR RESULTS

1. 97% of Doctors found company sponsored health camps and patient awareness program useful
2. 78% doctors were willing to participate in company sponsored health camps and patient education programs, 15% doctors refused to participate while 7% doctors were indecisive.
3. 65 % doctors agreed that participation in company sponsored health camps and patient education programs lead to better brand recall. While 20% doctors opined that participation did not help them brand recall whereas 15% doctors were not sure.

IX. IMPLICATIONS

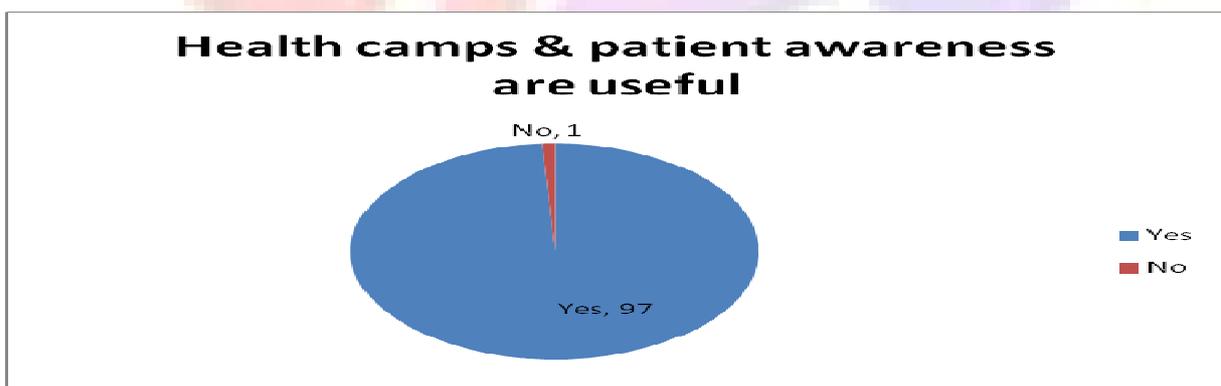
From the above study it is imperative that majority of doctors found the company sponsored health camps and patient awareness useful, they were willing to participate in these programs and participation helped in better brand recall. The study shows that company’s promotional strategy of promoting brands by sponsoring these programs is effective.

REFERENCES

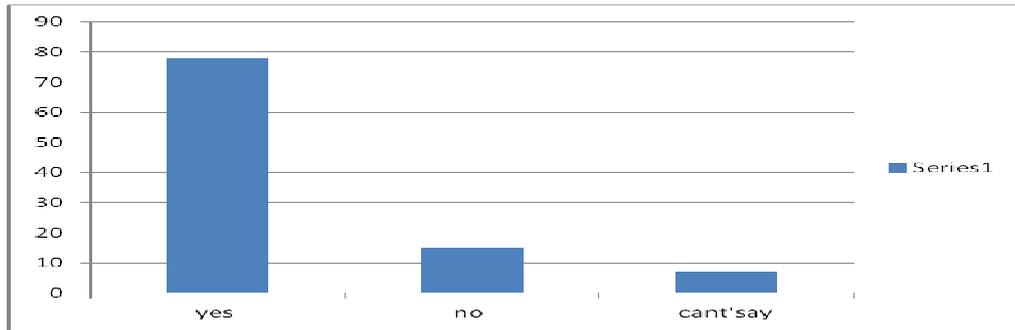
1. Indian J Med Res 134, August 2011, pp143-145
2. Times of India May 11,2012
3. The Hindu, Chennai, Oct 2013.

ANNEXURE

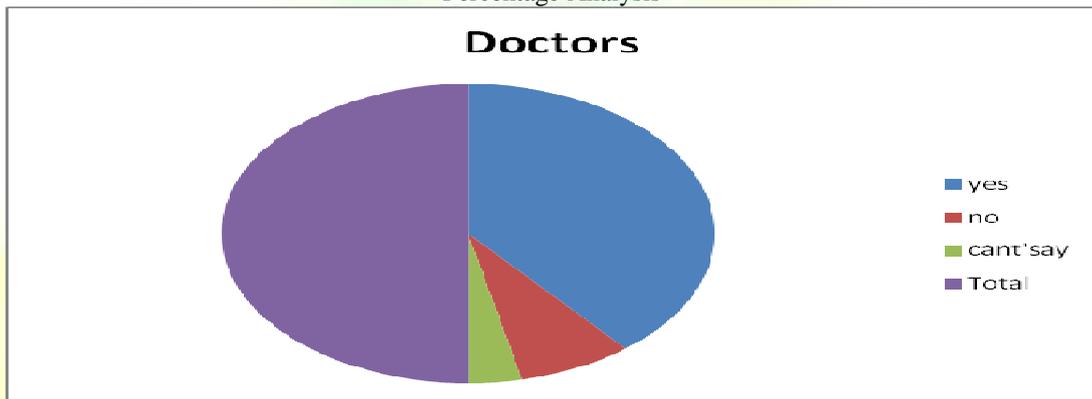
Do you feel health camps and patient awareness program useful							
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent			Frequency
Valid	Yes	97	97	98.97959	Yes		97
	No	1	1	1.020408	No		1
	Total	98	98	100			
Missing	System	2	2				
Total		100	100				



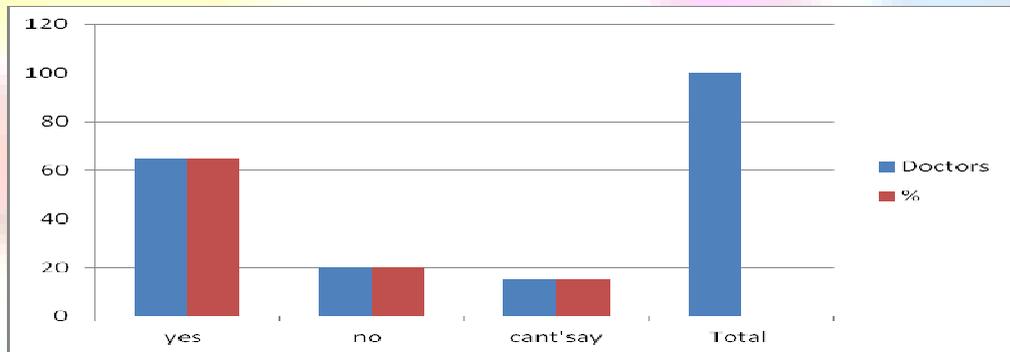
2. Do doctors willing to participate in health camps and Patient education programs



Percentage Analysis



3. Whether participation for doctors in the company sponsored health camps and patient education programs helps in better brand recall



Percentage Analysis

