

# Self-medication in Hungary

Ph.D. Thesis

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## **1. Introduction**

In professional quarters they call self-medication, an activity when people decide about the kind of medicine and the way of using that certain medicine to cure their independently diagnosed changes in health, entirely on their own.

One of the means of self-healing, next to changing the way we live, is to purchase and take non- prescription drugs. This practice has many benefits. People can also save a lot of time and energy by employing this practice in their everyday life, instead of sitting and waiting, sometimes even for an hour, at the doctor's office for a common cold.

Doctors will also have more time to treat patients in need of more serious medical attendance and the government will have fewer expenses as well, because of the fact that non-prescription medications are not subsidised by it.

For a growing proportion of the population, the pharmacy has become the first and often the only stop in the search for medicine or medical advice.

The pharmacy may become the first and last link to patients, where they can still be directed, helped, supported and educated concerning medication choices. The pharmacist is the individual who can do this with competence. The population

expects information concerning medications to be communicated from the pharmacist in an understandable way. It should be in the pharmacy that patients learn about the medications they take, because it is here that the pharmacist is present, with knowledge concerning patients' prescription medications and concomitant medical conditions that may affect OTC drug choices.

Well-known, that the majority patients' differs from the medicine picking proposal written down for him in a lesser or greater measure. The clinical consequences of the incomplete patient cooperation have economic effects in the medicinal therapy.

## 2. Objectives

I aim set in my dissertation to survey the Hungarian population's habits concerning the picking of medicines non-prescription drugs, let me survey to the complience truth their relation, and the influencing effect of the advertisements.

I looked for the answer, that for the population how, in what could be or it would be necessary to provide more help in the self-medication, in patient cooperation.

- I examine it the patient and the medicine, and the patient's and hygienic specialists' communication, and in these residing- not exploited- opportunities.
- I support the importance of the copmlience with data, I examine the factors affecting it.

I set it aim that I should receive a real image it self-medication situation, and his opportunities:

1. The primary aim of the present study is to survey the relationship between pharmacists and self-medication, to give an overview of their opinions on advertisements of non-prescription drugs and to evaluate the knowledge of and familiarity with medicines held by individuals purchasing them for self-treatment.

2. The primary objective of this research was to evaluate the pharmacist's views on self-medication, their perceptions of advertisements for OTC medicines, and their knowledge and awareness of people that purchase OTC medicines.
3. From the two visual angles I did happened the comparison of research. The results of this utilizable the education, in the development of professional developments, methodologies, protocols the patient cooperation, and self-medication area.

### **3. Methods**

Questionnaire cross-section research, which was primer quantitative asking, forms the main axis of my research. The research consisted of two capital parts:

1. I looked for the answer in the patients' questionnaire asking, that the self-medication how enlightened into the pharmacy dropping in, how much the advertisements, the environmental factors affect them, they ask in the pharmacy, a what kind of other information source is being looked for in case of their problem.
2. I examined the patients' know the non- prescription drugs based on their experience among the specialists working in the pharmacy, what kind the patient cooperation is considered, where the patients try manage to get adequate information from their medicines according to opinion.

1. 2005 of his springs (March June in a month) I handed out some 1450 questionnaires randomly into selected Hungary pharmacies. It was aim in order for me to define the population habits concerning the picking of non-prescription drugs, and let me assess the effect of the advertisements.

2. 2006 of his springs (March June in a month) 6000 pieces of questionnaire I sent it - in the accompaniment of a letter -

into Hungary pharmacies. The primary aim of the study, that let it survey the chemists' relation self-medication, examines it concerned, let him aggregate their opinion from the advertisements of the medicines which can be received non-prescription, and from the knowledge of the people buying these, his knowledge. I look for the answer for it yet in my analysis, how it would be possible to help the population in right, in more fruitful one how it self-medication.

Statistical processing: SPSS prepared 14.0 programs. The different criteria (age, not, educational level, where works) the comparison of subgroups constituted on his basis with a viewpoint variance analysis, you are a cross board with an examination we made it, 95%-os significance beside a level. The frequency board the number of the watch, percentile and accumulated shows his percentile distribution in his case changing on all of them. The cross board you are two for more of his changing frequency distributions his fusion into a board. We performed the hypotheses test using a chi square test, with Yates correction where necessary.

## 4. Results

1. I would like it in the undermentioned ones the patient to announce the result of asking:

We received 743 evaluable and 7 non-evaluable questionnaires; therefore, almost all the respondents (50%) gave valuable answers.

The half of the asked individuals collects medicine, the largest one regularly in a proportion the ones with a secondary qualification, the ones with a Elementary education observe them then. While 53% of participants who had a secondary school education used medications, only 40% of participants who had higher educational qualifications reported regular medication use. Four per cent of participants reported never taking medicaments; this finding was most common among participants with a secondary school education who looks at an advertisement a lot, daily many times, the average talks over his decision with a specialist often. -44%-. Overall, 23% of respondents reported seeing medication advertisements several times per week. A total of 7% reported seeing a medication advertisement monthly or twice per year, and 6% reported never seeing or hearing a medication advertisement.

A significant difference appears in the admission of the advertisements between genders and in the look of educational level. Forty per cent of survey participants reported consulting with a specialist before buying non-prescription drugs. Employed respondents were most likely to consult a specialist, followed by pensioners, with >40% seeking consultation. Overall, 27.0% of participants reported that they do not consult a pharmacist, and 31% reported doing so occasionally. Overall, 23.0% of respondents who took non-prescription drugs reported being greatly influenced by the packaged drug information. Approximately one-half of employed participants reported being greatly influenced by the packaged drug information; 41.0% of pensioners reported being greatly influenced by the packaged drug information. Thirty-seven per cent of all respondents reported being somewhat influenced by the packaged drug information. Of this group, 70.0% were employed and 22.0% were pensioners. Almost 20.0% of those who completed questionnaires were not influenced by the packaged drug information. However, four to five persons decided not to take the medication after reading packaged information. Employed participants were most likely to decide not to take a drug after reading the package (60.0%);

this ratio decreased to approximately one-third among pensioners.

Forty-four per cent of participants reported asking pharmacists about the effects of the non-prescription medications they purchased.

What participants are interested in when non-prescription drugs are recommended to them?

Respondents most commonly mentioned the effect of the medication, followed by price, its expected side effects and how it should be taken.

Some people are curious about what is the agent, this ingredient for the medicine, how concerned this packing.

2. I would like it in the undermentioned ones the pharmacist to announce the result of asking:

A total of 536 questionnaires were evaluated. The respondents were between ages 19 and 75, with a mean age of 45.9 years.

The ratio of women to men was 4.2:1.

The respondents serve at pharmacy counters on a full-time basis.

More than 70% of specialists observed that patients only have a basic understanding of OTC medicines. The view that patients are unenlightened, but nevertheless over-medicate themselves,

was held most prevalently (40%) among pharmacists and pharmaceutical assistants. This opinion was held by 31% of respondents, comprising four times as many women as men. On average, 36.6% of respondents observed that 50-70% of patients request medicines by name; this belief was held by 54.5% of pharmacists.

We found that 20.7% of respondents believed that the introduction of pharmacist care programs would be of great assistance to the population; 12.9% stated that the creation of an advice counter would be very useful; and 48.3% said that the best way to help the population would be through advice and communication. About 36.0% of respondents believed it would be possible to help patients by being patient and attentive when they purchase OTC medicine. Expertise, authority, and interpersonal skills would help the patient, according to 31.7% of respondents; 41.1% held the opinion that more time should be devoted to each patient; and 46.6% said a greater emphasis must be placed on prevention. About 38.0% of pharmacists judged that a long list of side-effects arouses uncertainty in patients.

## 5. CONCLUSION

A great part of the population knows only of those medicaments which are actually advertised, but they do not hear about other products with similar effects. This image is mixed, because there are people who are rather well-informed concerning non-prescription medicaments, whilst there are others who are rather uninformed. We found that more than 70% of pharmacy professionals observed that patients only have a basic understanding of OTC medicines. Some 50-70% of the population request OTC medicines by name.

They do not really know about non-prescription medicaments, however, and they base their decisions on the influence of the advertisements they see, hear, or read, so that the expected effect fails. The image of medicaments becomes dubious or negative without professional advice. Without an expert's information or advice the patients can only rely upon the information given in the brochure enclosed, and a responsible decision affecting their health should be brought about individually on this basis.

What is the cause of misuse and why do almost 60% of purchasers not consult a professional about their decisions?

According to the results of the survey, (44%) patients most frequently think that they know the effects of the drugs. More than 70% of specialists observed that patients only have a basic understanding of OTC medicines.

The most advertisements did not give precise information, an opinion shared by 70% of pharmacists working in small settlements.

Seventy per cent of respondents reported reading the drug information contained in or printed on packages of non-prescription drugs. 10.0% reported never or only rarely reading the drug packaging. Overall, 23.0% of respondents who took non-prescription drugs reported being greatly influenced by the packaged drug information. Similar hypotenuse research was not made of both sides in Hungary yet. Which would survey it, the self-medication his situation in this country. Specialists' asking did not happened in a big number like this. Though the package of questions only both customers - it is possible-to reveal it with participants' asking objectively in the service. Visible, how they answer an identical question how differently. How other come on the judgement of that thing for them. The comparison of the questions may be useful for everybody, since it is indicative of a direction in it on a what kind of

manner we could help the patients in more efficient one it in self-medication.

It is necessary to draw the attention of the population to the fact that it is reasonable to ask for advice from an expert when buying the first non-prescription medicament and not to buy it based on the influence of advertisements. Besides, effective algorithms should be elaborated within the field of self-medication. At the same time, it would be important to improve the information technology background, which would make the connection of databases of pharmacies and doctors possible, and by this an exact overview could be obtained on the full-scale medication therapy of different patients. In other words, besides being excellent communicators, pharmacists should also know advertisements, and the novel principles and results of the psychology of persuasion.

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