

EMERGING CONCEPT AND GLOBAL TRENDS OF OTC DRUGS IN PHARMACEUTICAL MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Most Nations accept over-the-counter sales lawfully. Medications that have legal authority for pharmacists to sell without a prescription are referred to as Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicines. OTC medications make healthcare more affordable and accessible, yet there are worries about their overuse and negative health impacts. There has been a sudden increase in OTC medicine in the pharmaceutical market during Covid-19 in 2019-20, now it is trending globally. The market for over-the-counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals was valued at USD 150.04 billion in 2022 and expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 5.73% to reach USD 234.38 billion by 2030. In 2024, the over-the-counter drug market in India is projected to be worth USD 6.73 billion. By 2029, it is anticipated to have grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.39% to reach USD 8.76

billion. Health authorities are beginning to promote the use of generic replacement more often due to economic concerns. If quality control and/or bioequivalence are subpar, this might potentially cause issues for medications with a limited therapeutic window. Drugs that are of inferior quality or even counterfeit are widely distributed because many poor nations lack the means and knowledge necessary to conduct adequate quality control.

KEYWORDS: OTC Drug, Marketing, Emerging market, Global trends, Future Outlook.

INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical Market

The Pharmaceutical market has been historically considered as one of the most strictly regulated industries, consistently producing high-quality pharmaceuticals for human use that have the intended pharmacological and therapeutic effects for the treatment of a wide range of illnesses.

Pharmaceutical Market in India

In 1901, the first Indian pharmaceutical business was founded and started operations in Calcutta, which is now Kolkata. The town is Asia's biggest Pharmaceuticals hub and is home to some of the largest pharmaceutical companies including Cipla, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Cadila Healthcare, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Abbott Laboratories, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, and Manjushree Technopack. Baddi houses a total of 3,120 factories belonging to leading pharma, FMCG and textile companies among others and which generate an annual turnover of Rs 60,000 crore. Baddi employs one-third of all persons engaged in Himachal's medium and large industries. In terms of revenue, the town contributes half of the state's total revenues generated from industries.

Current Landscape of the OTC Drug in Pharma Market

- **44%** of US adults use OTC medicine when they need to
- **35%** of people aged 25–34 use OTC medicines in the EU
- **8%** of Asian and **75.7%** of African consumers self-medicate with OTC medicines.

OTC Drug Global Segment Value in Pharma

- Cough, cold, and allergy – \$39.9 B
- Vitamins and supplements – \$9 B
- Dietary supplements – \$197.2 B
- Pain relief – \$8 B.^{[14][15]}

1] It's All About Wellness and Illness Prevention

- Having impacted the food and beverage industry, OTC is also feeling the rising tide of the 'wellness' juggernaut. Millennia's, in particular, think in terms of holistic health, with a distinct focus on clean living and illness prevention. Categories like weight management, sports nutrition, and skin health dominate this category, and are one of OTC pharmaceutical marketing companies' biggest sales and growth opportunities.

- The challenge Stiff competition from the beauty industry, as well as food and beverage manufacturers. This could lead to marketing challenges in the face of advertising-friendly industries.^[16]

2] Millennials are Going Online to Research and Manage Their Health

- Millennials treat visits to the doctor as a last resort.
- 55% of millennials believe online health information is as reliable as the information they get from their doctor, favoring OTCs and other alternatives, which they learn about online.
- It's no surprise that a group, which relies on chatbots, forums, Facebook, and messaging apps to ask questions and post videos and images, would turn to these same digital tools for healthcare advice. For potentially embarrassing topics, like sexual health, these channels offer a level of comfort and discretion that a doctor's office can't match. And when it comes to choosing OTC products, this group likes to crowd source recommendations.^[17]
- It's not just Millennial who think this way.
- Over 30% of US adults and 55% of people in the EU self-diagnose online.
- For OTC brands, who've been slow movers in the digital space, this is an opportunity to expand their web and social presence.
- Compliant digital sales promotions in pharmaceutical industry can help boost awareness trials and engagement.
- Read our blog on How to Use Sweepstakes, Contests & Promotions in Customer Acquisition.^[18]

3] Cost Conscious Consumers Are Less Brand Reliant

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3] Cost Conscious Consumers Are Less Brand Reliant

- Consumers share an increasing belief that the drug ingredients – and not the brand – are what matters.
- 50% of Millennials buy OTC medicine over their preferred brand because they have a coupon, and 64% buy OTC brands because they're on sale.
- This trend has spread widely. For example, IRI data reveals that total private label brand growth continues to outpace national brand growth in Australia. And it's a similar story elsewhere. For the OTC Pharma industry, where consumers are often overwhelmed by product options with little guidance on differentiation, there's a lot of brand building to do.

Trends in the Generic Drug in Pharma Market

The Global Generic Drugs Market is valued at USD 411.99 Billion in the year 2022 and is expected to reach a value of **USD 613.34 Billion** by the year 2030. The Global Market is anticipated to grow to exhibit a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 5.10% over the forecast period.

The landscape of the Generic Drugs Market is marked by dynamic forces that influence its trajectory. The surge in chronic ailments encompassing diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, coupled with the expanding geriatric demographic, escalating healthcare expenditures, a fervent demand for generic medications, and a slew of patented drugs approaching their expiration, converge as catalysts for the market's growth.

Top Companies Generic Drugs Manufacturing in Global Market

- Mylan N.V.
- Abbott Laboratories

- Eli Lilly and Company
- STADA Arzneimittel AG

Over the Counter Drug

Medications that are sold without a prescription from an authorized physician are known as Over-The-Counter (OTC) medications.

These Over-The-Counter, or non-prescription, medications are easily available to the general population without a prescription from an authorized physician and are considered to be safe and effective. These are not intended to replace prescription medications; rather, their main purpose is to relieve symptoms.

These over-the-counter medications reduce waiting times in an authorized physician offices, save money on expensive consulting fees, and save time in medical facilities.

The medical community is concerned about the safety of its patients who self-medicate due to the irrational usage of these drugs.

In India OTC drug comes under the schedule-K, Drugs classified in Schedule K of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, do not require a license to be sold if they are sold by a store other than a chemist's shop, according to Rule 123.

If OTC monograph pharmaceuticals satisfy section 505G of the FD&C Act, including the OTC drug monograph (OTC monograph) and other applicable standards, they may be sold under section 505 of the FD&C Act without an authorized drug application. An over-the-counter drug monograph lays out the requirements that an OTC drug in a specific therapeutic category (such as antacids or sunscreens) must meet in order to be considered generally recognized as safe and effective (GRASE) for the purpose for which it is intended, including active ingredients, uses (indications), dosages, routes of administration, labeling, and testing.

Advantage of OTC Drug

- Suitably marked
- Patients have the ability to immediate self-diagnose and self-treat
- There is no need for medical professionals.

Disadvantage of OTC Drug

- The patient could select the incorrect medication.

- Patients have no idea about the interaction and side-effect of drug.
- The progression of an illness might be caused by inadequate therapy.

New Concepts in the OTC Drug Market

1. Transition from Prescription to OTC

Perhaps the most revolutionary trend is the Rx-to-OTC switch, whereby medications that were once prescription-only are now available over the counter. This transition, overseen by organizations such as the FDA (U.S.) or EMA (Europe), is based on the safety profile of the drug and patient demand for increased control.

Examples

- Loratadine (Claritin): Antihistamine switched to OTC in most countries.
- Omeprazole: A proton pump inhibitor that was once prescription-only, now available OTC in most markets.

2. Digital Health Integration

OTC medicines are more closely linked to digital health platforms, providing apps that direct self-treatment, monitor symptoms, and suggest OTC treatments. This is especially convenient in chronic ailments such as allergies or heartburn.

3. Self-Care and Wellness Boom

Consumers are adopting preventive care and wellness, driving demand for vitamins, minerals, herbal supplements, and immunity enhancers—most of which belong to the wider OTC category.

4. Consumer-Focused Marketing

Marketing of OTC drugs is shifting from medical to lifestyle branding. Firms concentrate on consumer experience, transparent packaging, influencer marketing, and focused online promotions to gain attention and trust.

5. Customized OTC Solutions

New technologies such as AI and genomics are making possible personalized OTC solutions personalized supplements, skin care, and nutrition-based OTC treatments based on individual information.

Future Outlook

The future of the OTC drug market looks promising, with emphasis on:

- Consumer empowerment
- Digital health integration
- Global harmonization of regulations
- Sustainable and clean-label OTC products
- Personalized self-care solutions

1. Consumer Empowerment

This is providing consumers with greater control and information to take responsibility for their own health decisions. In pharmaceutical marketing, this is:

- Informing consumers about drug benefits and safety.
- Fostering self-diagnosis and self-treatment (within safe limits).
- Raising awareness of conditions that can be treated with OTC products.
- Employing clear, simple language in marketing and packaging.
- Example: Commercials that not only sell a cold remedy but also educate consumers when to take it and how it can be part of an overall wellness regimen.

2. Digital Health Integration

This entails combining digital technology and tools with OTC drug use and marketing. It encompasses:

- Mobile apps that monitor medication taking or recommend OTC products.
- AI chatbots for tailored product recommendations.
- E-commerce sites and telehealth services marketing OTC brands.
- Intelligent packaging with QR codes that connect to digital information or use instructions.

Example: A cold medicine brand teaming up with a symptom checker app to suggest its products directly.

3. Global Harmonization of Regulations

This is harmonizing drug requirements, labeling, and approvals across the globe to improve marketing and distribution. For pharma marketers, this involves:

- Developing campaigns that perform in multiple markets.

- Streamlining packaging and messaging to global specs.
- Easier entry into new markets due to fewer regulatory hurdles.

Example: An international pain relief brand coming to market with identical packaging and messaging in the EU and Asia due to harmonized ingredient regulations.

4. Clean-label and Sustainable OTC Products

Customers increasingly seek products that are environmentally sustainable and contain open, unregulated ingredients. Marketers mean this as:

- Emphasizing "green" or biodegradable packaging.
- Marketing natural or plant-based ingredients.
- Steering clear of artificial color, preservatives, or "chemical-sounding" names.
- Aligning with moral values such as cruelty-free testing.

Example: A sleeping pill marketed as "made from valerian root with no artificial additives, in a 100% recyclable bottle."

5. Personalized Self-Care Solutions

Personalization is a big thing in pharma these days, even for OTC. That is, adapting products and marketing to individual needs:

- Personalized vitamin packs or allergy solutions.
- Data-driven marketing based on consumer behavior insights.
- Providing product bundles or suggestions based on lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

The international OTC medicine market is in the process of a dynamic change, prompted by changes in consumer behavior, technological convergence, and regulatory transformation. With healthcare systems across the globe encouraging self-care and low-cost solutions, OTC medicines are becoming increasingly prominent as a first-line option for treating routine health ailments.

New ideas like the Rx-to-OTC switch, digital health assistance, and personalized wellness solutions are transforming the way consumers engage with medication. At the same time, worldwide trends such as the growth of e-commerce, increasing access in emerging markets, and the wellness movement are transforming the competitive environment.

In spite of issues such as the potential for abuse and different regulatory environments, the future of OTC medicines is set to experience strong growth. Success in this area will be determined by how well industry stakeholders manage to balance innovation, consumer education, and safety. In the end, the growth of OTC medicines not only empowers individuals to take charge of their health but also plays a key role in building more sustainable and accessible healthcare systems globally.

REFERENCE

Certainly! Below is a curated list of **30 references** that you can incorporate into your article on "*Emerging Concepts and Global Trends of OTC Drugs in the Pharmaceutical Market*," covering aspects from the introduction to the pharmaceutical market:

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