

e-pharmacy:present scenario with respect to covid-19 and its future prospect

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ABSTRACT

The advancement of technology through continuous research and development has supported to upgrade the quality of human life. The invention of online shopping based on I.C.T. became the recent trend of our society. The biggest advantage and benefit of e-pharmacy is its omnipresence, convenience and easy accessibility to the customers. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, e-models became very popular, especially among urban areas. In this paper, the study is concerned with the customer attitude and views on this new channel of drug distribution before Covid, during Covid and after Covid(now) using the data collected by online questionnaire from general population.

Keywords:- e-pharmacy,covid-19,online

INTRODUCTION

E-Pharmacy

E-pharmacy refers to electronic pharmacy or we can say that online selling of medicines. This platform helps us to avail lifesaving medicines at our doorsteps without having to leave the home. E-Pharmacy is a subset of E-commerce. We noticed that E-Pharmacy is most demanding in Covid situations when people are not able to go outside due to lockdown. Also, we can find that most of the old age people are alone in their home as their children used to live in other countries and sometimes, they suffer from chronic diseases for that they are not able to leave their home and buy medicines from nearby medicine shops and at that time they have to depend on the E-pharmacy apps. Also, if they are not familiar with the modern technology then it would not be a big deal because their children can make an order the medicines at any part of world and it will be delivered to their doorsteps. Not only old age people, these online medicine apps are helpful for other people too and make things easier.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Year	Serial no.	Author	Name of the paper	Findings
2021	1	Dipankar Dutta, Bedanta Bhattacharjee	Consumer preference and buying pattern of medicines through e-pharmacy during the covid-19 pandemic in Silchar, Assam	Online pharmacies became popular due to emergence of the Covid 19 pandemic
2021	2	Ritika Jain	Competitive Advantages and Competition Issues: Analysis of E-Pharmacy Market in India	Proper amendment of the Competition law and e-pharmacy law should be made to cater to current market situation
2020	3	Agasa Ramu Mahesh, Vimal John Samuel, Sourav Bag and Pavan Kalyan BG	E-Pharmacies: An emerging market in Indian retail pharmacy, An Indian perspective	Proper rules and regulations should be set up
2018	4	S.V. Chordiya, B. M. Garge	E-pharmacy vs conventional pharmacy	Advantages and disadvantages of e-pharmacy and conventional pharmacy and expectation of positive transition in healthcare sector through the use of advanced technology.
2018	5	Architha Aithal, Dr. A. R. Shabaraya	Users Perspectives on Online Pharmacy Model	Strict rules should be introduced and implemented to reap the benefits of online pharmacy

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

In this study, we are trying to show how E-Pharmacy is taking place everywhere in a rapid manner. Before lockdown, E-Pharmacy was not in so much demand.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To compare the use of E-Pharmacy applications in pre-Covid, during Covid & post-Covid(Considering the present situation as post-Covid as the number of Covid cases are much lower than before).
- To see whether people are depending more on the technologies or not & what they prefer more in this present situation.
- To evaluate a comparison between the Traditional Pharmacy concept vs the Modern Pharmacy concept.
- To comprehend how much the use of pharmacy app has increased globally since the pandemic and how much it has been impacted by COVID.
- To assess the respondent's use of technology in their daily lives, both now and in the future.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

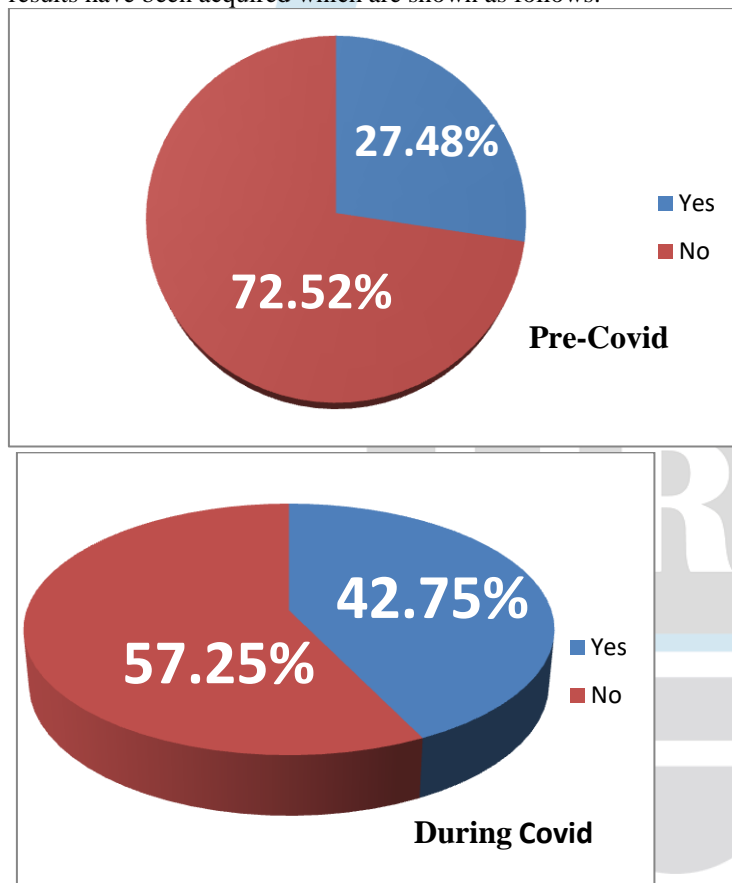
Research methodology is categorized as the systematic and scientific procedure of data collection, analysis, interpretation and implication which is relevant to any business problem. Non-empirical survey research method is used to study customer attitude and behaviour towards e-pharmacy models. The convenient sample of size n=131 is obtained through online questionnaire. Methodology to capture on e-pharmacy is based on primary data only.

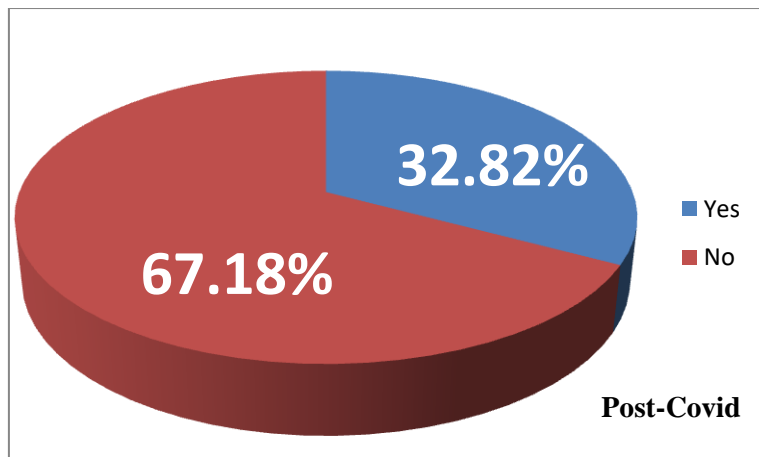
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The research area of the study is covered most of the urban areas but it is difficult to cover each and every district mostly the rural areas. This research is completely based on the information provided by the respondents. Therefore, the accuracy of this research is not fully perfect. The time factor can be considered as one of the limitations.

PERIODICAL ANALYSIS

This study is conducted based on 131 respondents who were asked whether they used E-Pharmacy services during the pre-covid and covid period and whether they are still using E-Pharmacy services in this post-covid period. Based on these answers, some results have been acquired which are shown as follows:





Those respondents were asked about the usage of any E-Pharmacy application. Out of them, only 27.48% used E-Pharmacy application in the pre-covid period, only 42.75% used E-Pharmacy application during covid and 32.82% are still using it in this post-covid period.

AGE-WISE ANALYSIS

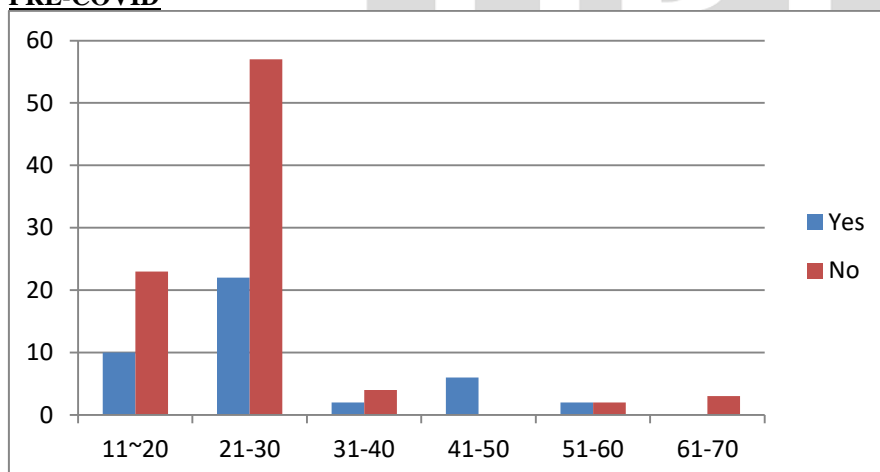
Those 131 samples are further classified into six class boundaries based on their ages with a class interval width of 10.

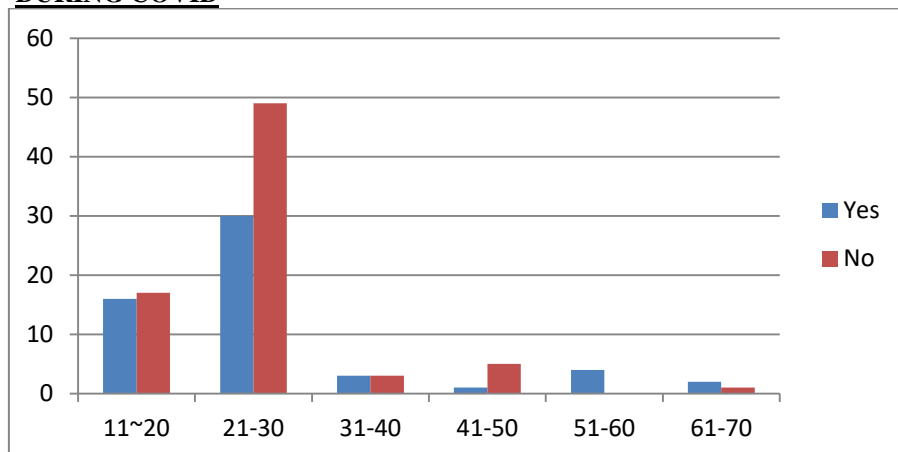
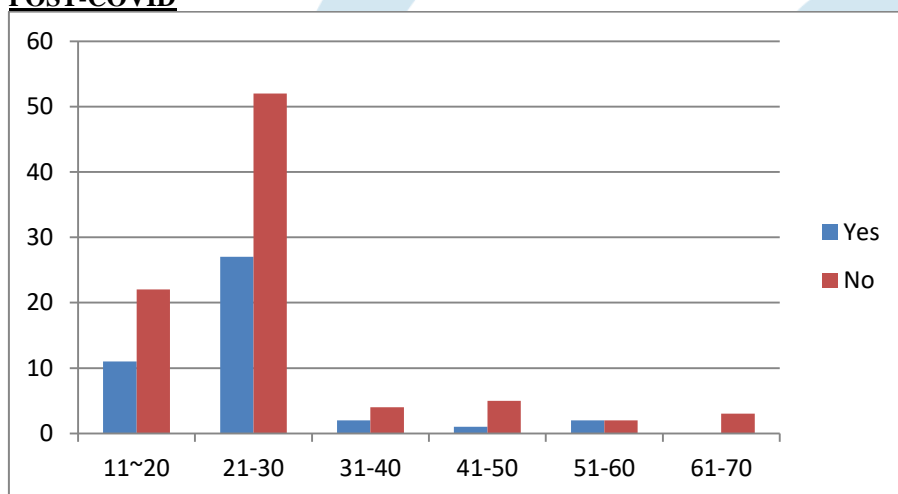
Class Boundaries (Ages)	Pre-Covid		During Covid		Post-Covid	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
11-20	10	23	16	17	11	22
21-30	22	57	30	49	27	52
31-40	2	4	3	3	2	4
41-50	6	0	1	5	1	5
51-60	2	2	4	0	2	2
61-70	0	3	2	1	0	3

In the age between 11 and 20, 21 and 30, 31 and 40, 41 and 50, 51 and 60, 61 and 70, there are 33, 79, 6, 6, 4, and 3 respondents respectively. It is to be shown how many people, based on our samples, took advantage of the E-Pharmacy services and did not take advantage of that in the pre-covid and the covid period; and how many people are still utilizing the service.

Based on the above data, graphical representations are as follows:-

PRE-COVID



DURING COVID**POST-COVID****CONCLUSIONS**

Finally summing up the above study it can be concluded that e-pharmacy do not have the personal touch that a traditional pharmacy has. Here one cannot get the chance to talk to with pharmacist to get the direct advice regarding the side effects of drugs. Hopefully our article explains a brief comparison of e-pharmacy over conventional pharmacy. The study reflects that people like e-pharmacy, as it is very convenient and easily accessible, but there is a vice-versa situation also. We followed there are some trustworthiness issues like over pricing, privacy of customers, unwanted frauds and rouge sites. There will always be a fear of fraudulence even if e-pharmacy gets the nod from the government. E-pharmacy has a limitation of access in remote areas. Having faith in health ministry to make proper norms before showing green signals to e-pharmacy, we urge for cheaper and more convenient healthcare at our doorstep.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the findings and the conclusions presented, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Customers prefer Apollo and PharmEasy app over any other E-Pharmacy apps due to better service within the stipulated time.
- Other E-Pharmacies except Apollo and PharmEasy should make an effort to create their applications in a way that includes a Government-approved certificate so that customers will trust and rely on them.
- Apps for E-Pharmacies must safeguard user data to prevent disclosure to the general public.
- Customers seek out medicines from nearby pharmacy shops since delivery fees are too expensive. Lowering delivery fees could have a significant impact on customers.
- The respondents also recommended that consumers would benefit in times of need if E-Pharmacy apps increase their selections of medicines with the same compositions.
- When it comes to E-Pharmacies, delivery time is always important, customers will be more likely to purchase medicines through E-Applications if delivery is made swiftly for emergency situations.
- In the pre-covid situation, only 27.48% people used the E-Pharmacy app, but during covid it had been increased by 15.27%(42.75%-27.48%) and in post-covid situation it has been decreased by 9.93% than during covid

situation. Ultimately, it can be said that 5.34% usage of e-pharmacy app has been increased from pre-covid to post-covid due to the comfortability.

- Companies may foster healthy competition by guaranteeing the highest quality of medicines.
- It is also recommended that if E-Pharmacy applications offer greater discounts than the neighbourhood pharmacy stores, customers will gravitate more towards them.
- If E-Pharmacies can improve access medicines in some rural areas, it will be beneficial for businesses as well as for the customers.
- By providing simple access, E-Pharmacy applications might attract senior citizens to make increasingly larger purchases using online E-Pharmacy apps.
- E-Pharmacy apps should attempt to offer online discussions with medical specialists, if they do so, patient's family will rely more on them.

E-Pharmacy apps may generate goodwill, customer's protection as well as their financial goal offering the aforementioned advice.

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