

# The influence of advertising of drugs on the level of self – medication

## ABSTRACT

## BACKGROUND

According to the head of the Ministry of Health advertising of medicines should be banned because the ban reduces the level of self-medication, which has a harvest scale in the Russian Federation. To date, it is necessary to raise drug awareness among citizens. In this case all kinds of advertising and various television programs inform us about diseases and their treatment. It leads to the fact that people mistakenly believe that any disease can be cured individually at home. The World Health Organisation statistics show that 68% of Russian citizens prefer to be treated independently buying drugs as well as biologically active supplements without consulting a specialist. This has a negative impact because properly chosen drugs as well as the self-medication lead to an upsurge in the mortality rate.

## METHODS

In this work we conducted a small investigation in the field of marketing of medicines. For a detailed study of advertising we have chosen the most popular TV channels. We have analysed the airtime of each channel according to several parameters. And to prove the influence of medical advertisements to the level of self-medication we conduct a survey among residents of the city of Perm.

## RESULTS

Based on the analysed data we concluded that 20 commercials airtime are accounted for by 5-8 clips advertising drugs 40% percent of which are taken by import drugs. This statistic gives accent to the role of advertising of medicinal products on the level of self-medication. The total percentage of people who prefer to give yourself a therapeutic aid is 72,5%. Only 27,5% citizens use the advice of the doctor .

## CONCLUSION

Enclosing it can be concluded that the widespread drug advertising on TV is one of the overarching factors in increasing level of self-development that is not good.

**KEYWORDS:** advertising of drugs, the level of self-medication, the pharmacy

## INTRODUCTION

How often do people think about side effects when they're watching drug's advertisement on TV? How is

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the self-medication connected with the advertisement of drugs? We will try to answer these and other questions in our article.

About 70% of Russians resort to self-medication suffering from minor health problems, thus avoiding a visit to a doctor. Many medical experts blame the situation on the widespread advertisement of drugs in the media, and appeal for a total ban of it.

Currently, the advertising of pharmaceutical products is carried out using all possible media. Thus, on average, 20-40% or more (!) airtime advertisement units are associated with the advertising of drugs, most of which are import drugs. The main pharmacological groups of the advertised drugs are: painkillers, drugs for the treatment of colds, dietary supplements, antimycotic, sedatives, for the treatment of viral diseases, biologically active additives.

Pharmaceutical Marketing - part of the overall marketing – is the process of implementation of pharmaceutical care activities aimed at meeting the needs and requirements of the population in pharmaceutical products [6].

The main objectives of advertising: formation of requirement for this product or service; motivation to acquire this particular product; motivation to apply to this particular company; the desire to make a particular consumer regular customer of the product or a regular customer of the company [5].

Thus we can see that the main purpose of advertising of pharmaceutical products is no different from any other product advertising - to ensure that the person has acquired the advertised product. But on level with it there is a number of some features related with medicine and health. It forces one to consider the

impact of advertising on people, not only in terms of commerce, but also in terms of public and personal security. For this reason the advertising of drugs in the pharmaceutical market is limited by federal law. Ethical standards of the pharmaceutical market prohibit direct link to manufacturer and patient. Most of the advertising media, such as television, radio and local newspapers are not used to promote drugs dispensed by prescription. In some countries there are legal restrictions on advertising of all kinds of medicines

Advertising of medicines is a specific field of activity in which closely overlap the commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies, manufacturers, distributors of medicines, the information needs of professionals and the public.

At the same time there is public concern about the effects of promotional activities for the safe use of pharmaceuticals. Because of the vital importance of (and at the same time the danger) drugs developed by the rules of their advertising with special rigor and detail. Where in other industries from unfair advertising suffers only purse competitor and consumer in the pharmaceutical field may suffer health or even life.

Russian pharmaceutical advertising market compared to Western European can be regarded as fully formed on both the legal regulation and ethical regulation.

World practice has developed legal standards that protect the patient from the promotional activities of pharmaceutical companies. Legislation in most countries of Europe, America and Asia regulates advertising activity of medical products by separate laws. The most important component of the system of external control of promotional activities in these countries is under government regulation. It is implemented through the creation of a broad legislative framework, the formation of the executive bodies of different degrees of exercising control.

In our country nowadays there isn't any special law regulating legal relations in the field of promotional activities, in the fields of health care, treatment of medical devices and drugs. Selected issue of these relations are regulated by the Federal Law "On Medicines", the Federal Law "On Advertising", the

Federal Law "On Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances," Fundamentals of the legislation on health care, medical Code of Ethics of the National Society of Physicians and the National Board of the Company, the Federal Law "On Trademarks", the Federal Law "On Competition and Restriction of Monopolistic Activity in Commodity Markets" [4].

For the first time the flow of drug advertising in Russia rushed to the pages of magazines and newspapers, on television screens and radio programs in 1994-1995. Already in 1995 the advertising of medicines on television increased to 3rd place on costs, and therefore in terms of airtime, in 1996 took the 5th place, retaining a place in the top ten in 1997.

In 1995, the Federal Law "On Advertising" shall enter into force, which introduced the basic requirements for the advertising of medicinal products (article 16.2). Namely: prohibits the promotion of unregistered drugs in the country; advertising of drugs dispensed by prescription can be distributed only through special editions for doctors and pharmacists; prohibited comparative advertising that violates the rules of fair competition; hidden advertising is forbidden; can't be used in advertising texts notion of superlatives, and so on [4].

## METHODS

The objective was to identify influence of advertising of medicinal products for the treatment of diseases without professional consultation.

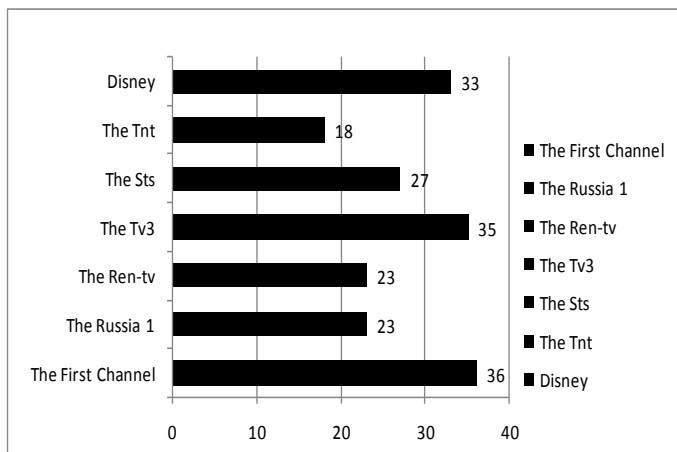
In our work we conducted a detailed investigation of drug advertising. Our research submitted 7 of the most popular TV channel: The First Channel, The Russia 1, The Ren-Tv, The Tv3, The Sts, The Tnt, The Disney Channel. We analysed advertising units, their duration, the intervals between ad units, the number of commercials in each block, the number of commercials drugs.

## RESULTS

Thus, it is possible now to observe the following situation when we watch TV programs: on average every 8-20 minutes of airtime are shown ad units, lasting from 3 to 5 minutes. The average number of commercials in one ad unit is 11-16, 2-5 of them fall

Table of some parameters of ads on different TV channels					
Channel	Duration of commercials	Duration of TV program	Amount of advertising blocks	Amount of advertising medicinal preparations	Amount of advertising medicinal preparations in percent
The First Channel	4-5 min	15-20 min	13-15	4-5	36
The Russia 1	4-5 min	17-19 min	21-23	4-5	23
The Ren-Tv	3 min	9-15 min	12-14	2-4	23
The Tv3	3 min	8-14 min	12-15	4-5	35
The Sts	3-4 min	14-19 min	14-16	3-4	27
The Tnt	4 min	13-19 min	15-16	2-3	18
Disney	4-5 min	12-17 min	11-13	3-4	33

Chart of advertising of medicinal products

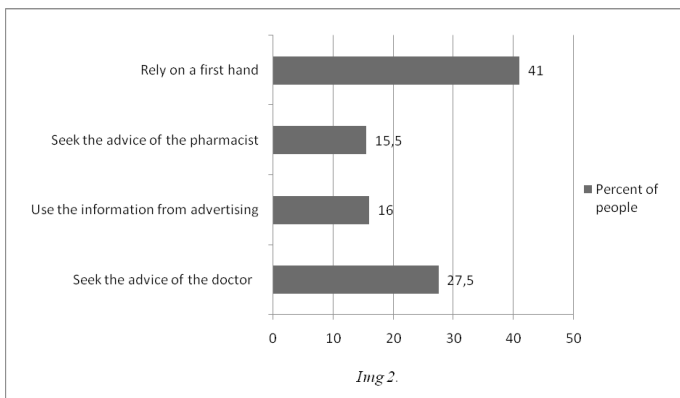
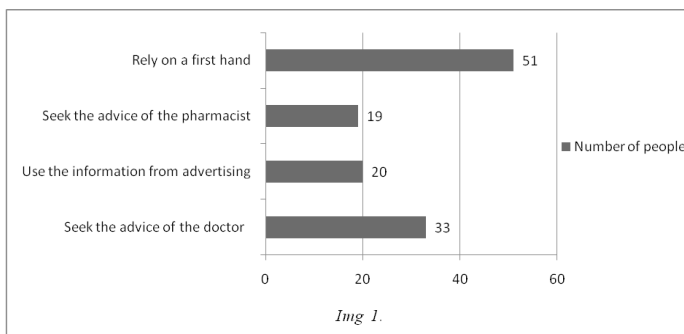


on the advertising of medicines, which is about 18-30% or more.

Based on these observations, we can also conclude the vast majority of import medicines advertised on all major television channels in our country. The main pharmacological groups of advertised drugs are: painkillers, drugs for the treatment of colds, dietary supplements.

Among the other things, as well as well-known reputable people are involved to the advertising of drugs in a “star” TV screen. Watching feature films, reality shows, variety programs on TV there are anyway the advertising of drugs voiced by the participants and actors.

The main method of unfair competition for professionals, mainly doctors, is the use in advertising of medicinal products known to be false information. As a rule, this information is not distributed through special editions - theoretical and practical issues, professional press, but in the form of prints (copies) of scientific articles or reports. These materials under the guise of scientific literature are distributed during scientific conferences and awarded to doctors during exhibitions [1;3].



Many companies realise that the promotion of prescription drugs through doctors takes much time and money and changed the strategy to promote such medicines in favor of public advertising. Under conditions when the self-medication (as it is now in Russia) permits the use of various remedies sold in pharmacies without doctor’s prescription and the patient decides which drug is to take, this method of unfair competition has been very effective. As a result, the share of direct violations of the law “On Advertising” prohibiting the advertising of prescription drugs in the media increased.

In the absence of a legal framework, which prohibits the participation of physicians in the advertising of medicines, many pharmaceutical companies unlawfully extended the working methods of advertising and marketing work with experts in the audience layman. No doubt, that the drug manufacturers are the initiators of attracting doctors to advertising.

Most of the violations of generally accepted rules and regulations of drug advertising, as a rule, are an attempt to draw more attention to the drug expanding consumer demand for it thereby to win the position that is more preferred than of competitive products. Due to imperfections in legislation, ethical self-regulation and control of drug advertising in the Russian pharmaceutical market there are experiencing particularly gross violations.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To date, regular TV watching or listening to the radio people get a clear idea what they should do in case of a particular disease, as well as in various diseases. Advertised medicines cure everything from the common cold to complex cardiac disease, the treatment of which should be assigned by an expert only.

It is noted that the commercials are often used to promote the market of drugs that do not have a high efficiency, but on their advance lots of money have been spent. Consider this, some expensive drugs may be much less effective than cheaper and less known analogs.

Also we think that time-saving factor exerts influence on the advertising. People in modern society live in a furious pace and prefer self-medication, because it does not require time to go to the clinic and stand in line to a doctor. Much easier to cope with the disease himself, to ran next day in the pharmacy and buy everything needed for treatment, acting up to advertising or pharmacist's opinion working in the pharmacy.

For this reason, we concluded that people think less about the side effects of medicines that affects the health of society as a whole. Watching the advertising of medicines most of the people respond to the basic, superficial symptoms on which they conclude that these features are essential for their ailment. But as it is known to medical professionals, the same medicine may cure and harm. It all depends on the exact symptoms of the individual organism, and only the competent experts can help the competent experts.

The results of a detailed study of commercials allowed us to observe a direct correlation between the amount

of the influence of advertising and the level of self-medication, which has an adverse effect on human health.

However, the results of social survey showed that the advertising of medicines is not the main factor affecting the level of self-medication. Large percentage of people surveyed said that it was guided by personal experience and advice pharmacist, indicating a minor role of advertising.

Summing up the discussion of this paper, to resolve the problems described above, the legislation is recommended to review individual items relating to drug promotion in order to reduce the level of self-medication among the population in our country and promoting the correct choice with the appearance of symptoms of a disease.

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