

ORIGINAL ARTICLE / PRACA ORYGINALNAAleksandra Czerw¹, Urszula Religioni¹, Katarzyna Grom, Anna Augustynowicz¹**THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING OF MEDICINAL PRODUCTS
ON OTC PAINKILLERS PURCHASE IN POLAND****WPŁYW REKLAMY TELEWIZYJNEJ PRODUKTÓW LECZNICZYCH
NA ZAKUP PRZECIWBÓLOWYCH LEKÓW OTC W POLSCE**

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S u m m a r y

I n t r o d u c t i o n . Drug manufacturers take a variety of activities to meet the needs of their potential customers. One of the most important elements of drug promotion is advertising. Numerous studies have shown that the most effective form of advertising is television advertising that combines vision with sound, which increases the chance of remembering the advertising.

T h e a i m of the study was to point out the relationship between television advertising and purchasing decisions on OTC analgesics among students of Warsaw Medical University.

M a t e r i a l a n d m e t h o d . The research tool was an anonymous survey. The research was conducted via the Internet.

R e s u l t s . The results showed that television advertising of medicinal products has a significant impact on purchasing decisions among students of Warsaw Medical University. However, students most often suggest the

efficacy of the drug while making the decision about purchasing of medicinal product (46.55%). Respondents indicated that the advertising is the most authentic, when the drug is recommended by a doctor. From among all OTC painkillers, students bought mainly headache tablets (90%) and the least often products for bones and joints ache (59.47%).

C o n c l u s i o n s . Television advertising is an important promotional tool and a starting point in terms of the impact on potential buyers of drugs. The study shows that television advertising has a significant impact also on the purchase decisions of students. The survey results also indicate that painkillers are one of the most popular categories of medicinal products available without a prescription, which confirms the information published in many reports from the pharmaceutical market, indicating that the consumption of painkillers constantly remains at a high level.

S t r e s z c z e n i e

W s t ę p . Producenci leków podejmują wiele różnych działań, aby zaspokoić potrzeby swoich potencjalnych klientów. Jednym z najważniejszych elementów promocji leków jest reklama. Liczne badania wskazują, iż najskuteczniejszą formą reklamy jest reklama telewizyjna, która łącząc wizję z fonią, podnosi stopień zapamiętywania treści przekazu reklamowego.

C e l e m b a d a n i a było wykazanie zależności pomiędzy reklamą telewizyjną a decyzjami zakupowymi dotyczącymi leków przeciwbólowych OTC wśród studentów Warszawskiego Uniwersytetu Medycznego.

M a t e r i a ł i m e t o d a . Narzędziem badawczym była anonimowa ankieta, a badanie przeprowadzono za pośrednictwem Internetu.

W y n i k i . Wyniki badania wykazały, iż reklama telewizyjna produktów leczniczych wywiera istotny wpływ na decyzje zakupowe wśród studentów Warszawskiego Uniwersytetu Medycznego. Podejmując decyzję o zakupie produktu leczniczego, studenci najczęściej jednak sugerują się skutecznością danego leku (46,55%). Respondenci wskazali, że przekaz reklamowy jest najbardziej autentyczny, gdy lek rekomendowany jest przez lekarza. Studenci

najczęściej korzystają ze środków przeciwbólowych OTC z powodu bólu głowy (90%), a najrzadziej z powodu bólu kości i stawów (59,47%).

Wnioski. Reklama telewizyjna stanowi ważne narzędzie promocji oraz punkt wyjścia w kwestii oddziaływania na potencjalnych nabywców leków. Przeprowadzone badanie wskazuje, iż reklama telewizyjna wywiera istotny wpływ także na decyzje zakupowe

studentów. Wyniki badania wskazują również, że leki przeciwbólowe stanowią jedną z najpopularniejszych kategorii produktów leczniczych dostępnych bez recepty, co potwierdza informacje publikowane w wielu raportach z rynku farmaceutycznego, wskazujące, że konsumpcja leków przeciwbólowych stale utrzymuje się na wysokim poziomie.

Key words: OTC drug, OTC drug's advertisement, pharmaceutical market

Słowa kluczowe: lek OTC, reklama leków OTC, rynek farmaceutyczny

INTRODUCTION

Health is one of the most important values for people. It is commonplace that in the case of pain people take various types of medicinal products.

Patients most often may obtain information about medicinal products available on the market by the promotional activities of pharmaceutical companies. One of these promotional tools is advertising that provides comprehensible information about medicines to potential customers by the media. The most important medium used by the creators of advertisements is television that due to the combination of vision and voice has the greatest impact on the viewer. The usage of such elements as appropriate colours, music, excitement and engagement, famous actors or experts in the transmission of advertising, influences the way of message reception by the audience, and may become a decisive factor while purchasing products.

The subject of the study was the influence of OTC analgesics advertisements on the purchasing decisions made by the students of Medical University of Warsaw. Students of medical faculties are specific consumers in the pharmaceutical market, because they have the opportunity to gain knowledge about medicines during lectures and classes. Therefore, it can be said that the OTC analgesics advertising should not affect the choices of that group of students. However, it turns out that some components of advertisements may influence the choice of a particular product and, consequently, affect the purchase of the drug.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the study was to point out the influence of the television commercial and its elements on OTC analgesics purchasing decisions among students of Medical University of Warsaw.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted via the Internet with online questionnaire inserted on a web portal /www.eBadania.pl/. The information about the study was sent to students by social network. Respondents were asked to complete 24 anonymous questions. There also appeared a few open and semi-closed questions. The sample size aggregated at 116 units.

RESULTS

80.18% of questionnaire participants claimed that they bought analgesics over the counter during the last six months, when 18.10% of them did not. Two of persons chose the answer "do not know".

Headache and migraine were the reasons of taking OTC analgesics for 90% of tested students, which makes it the most frequent account. Over 4% of respondents used OTC painkillers a few times a week, 6.03% of them once a week, 18.96% at least twice a month, 19.82% once a month, 23.27% once a three months, 7.75% once a year and 10.34% less often than once a year.

Toothache was the reason of use OTC analgesics less often than once a year for 46.55% of respondents. They were used once a year by 8.62% of tested students, once a three months by 4.31% and once a month by 0.86%. OTC analgesics were not used by them more often.

The second frequent reason for using OTC analgesics among respondents were stomach ache and menstrual pain. 46.55% of students claimed that it took place less often than once a year, 7.75% once a year, 29.31% once a month, 11.10% at least twice a month and 3.44% once a week. None of the tested people used analgesics because of stomach ache a few times a week.

The bones and joints pain was a reason to buy analgesics OTC less often than once a year for the

most number of respondents (49.13%). Once a year they were bought by 5.17% of tested people, once a three months by 4.31% of them and once a month by 0.86%. The OTC analgesics were not used at least two times a month, once a week and a few times a week by any of the respondents.

The other kind of pain than headache, toothache, stomach ache, bones and joints pain was the reason of using OTC analgesics less than once a year by 49.13% of respondents. Once a year they were used by 4.31% of them, once a three months by 3.45% and few times a week by one person. None of the tested students used OTC analgesics once a week, at least two times a month and once a month.

As the results show, 46.55% of respondents claimed that when they buy OTC analgesics they pay greater attention to its effectiveness, while 32.75% of them do not. TV commercial has the greatest influence on purchasing decisions of 23.27% tested students, the same percentage of them answered that it does not matter to them. 21.55% of interviewees think that a package is the most important factor for them, for 20.68% of students - an opinion about medicine on the Internet and for 10.34% - an opinion of others. Other tested students indicated application form (12.93%), safety of OTC analgesic (12.06%), length of uptime (13.79%) and price (15.51%). 33.62% of respondents pay attention to other factors.

Almost 40% of tested students always take the composition of the drug under consideration. 38.79% of them do it sometimes, 14.65% - usually and 6.03% - never.

On the question about OTC analgesics purchasing decisions, 51.72% of respondents answered that these decisions are intentional. More than 26% of interviewees make purchasing decisions spontaneously with encouragement of advertisement. 15.51% of them claimed that they buy medicine with the advice of a pharmacist. One person answered that he buys a medicine when notices that someone else is buying it as well. 4.31% of tested people pointed out other possibilities like following their own experiences, price or acquaintances' opinions.

29.31% of tested students claimed that they buy OTC analgesics under the influence of TV commercials, 18.1% based on pharmacist's advice, 17.24% on acquaintances' advice, 18.1% on opinions found on the Internet and 15.51% on prices.

Television is a common source of information influencing purchase decisions of OTC analgesics for

50% of respondents. The second place is taken by the Internet, chosen as a source of information by 43.10% of tested people. Information obtained in the pharmacy was indicated by 38.79% of interviewees, press - by 14.65% and the radio - by 8.62%. The answer "other" was chosen by 32.75% of respondents, including the other sources as a family, physicians, medicines data bases, medical books or pharmacology classes.

Most of the respondents (51.71%) claim that TV commercial has an influence on their purchasing decisions of OTC analgesics, 12.06% of them think that this influence is explicit. 39.65% of tested students claim that TV commercials may have an impact on choice of the medicine, while 23.27% of them answer rather not, and the same percentage of respondents stated lack of commercial influence on their decisions.

The vast majority of respondents (51.71%) advocated the fact that TV commercials do not bring sufficient information about action and using of OTC analgesics. Almost one in ten interviewees thinks that the amount of information is adequate. About 20% of students do not have an opinion on that subject.

OTC painkillers known from TV commercials are definitely more willingly bought by 2.58% of respondents and rather more willingly by 38.29%. Known medicines are not definitely bought by 13.79% of students and rather not by 24.13%. One in five interviewees answer "do not know".

Most respondents claim that they know brands such as Apap – 32.75%, Ibuprom-31.89%, Ibuprom Max – 6.89%, Metafen – 2.58%, Nurofen – 4.31%, Ibum – 7.75%, Etopiryna – 5.17% from TV commercials. Individual persons pointed out Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Ibuprom Sprint Caps, Ibuprom Zatoki, No-spa, Opokan, Panadol Femina, Paracetamol and Pyralgina.

When asked which motives and feelings used in TV commercials have the biggest impact on decision of purchasing OTC analgesic, majority of respondents chose a slogan "there is no pain you cannot win with" (40.51%). Gladness was indicated by 14.65%, happiness by 10.34%, rest and carelessness by 15.51%, strengthening the family ties and spending time with a beloved person – 6.89%, a smiling face - 13.79%, spending free time actively - 24.13%. The smallest number of respondents (4.31%) indicated the motive of ambition. Other motives and emotions used in TV commercials have an influence on the purchase of OTC analgesics for 21.55% of respondents.

In the research the majority of polled students (87.93%) stated that a TV commercial had not been a

main impulse of the purchase of the OTC painkillers within last six months. For 4.31% of respondents commercial was the main impulse for purchase, while 7.75% do not remember whether the advertisement had an impact or not.

Almost 95% of respondents answered that it had not happened to them to buy unneeded OTC analgesics under the influence of a TV commercial within last six months. Only one person claimed that he had bought unnecessary medicine because of TV commercial. 2.58% of tested students do not remember if such a situation took place or not.

The vast majority of interviewees (74.13%) answered that they do not trust the advertised OTC analgesics more than in those medicines which are not advertised. 12.06% of them claimed that they trust more OTC analgesics which are advertised on television more often, while 13.79% of them do not know if it matters to them.

The largest amount of respondents (62.93%) remembered a TV commercial of OTC analgesics called Apap as the best one. 56.03% of tested students pointed out Etopiryna, 54.31% Ibuprom, 44.82% Ibum and Metafen 22.41%. Three persons indicated TV commercials of Nurofen, Opokan and Excedrin Migrastop as the best ones.

Respondents remember the commercial slogan "Goździkowa reminds" the best – 74.13%. The slogan "Caring about your safety" was pointed out by 50% of tested students, and "brilliant connection for pain" by 24.13% of them. The least number of interviewees chose the slogan "for unbeaten" – 15.5%.

For 52.58% of respondents the most authentic TV commercial of analgesic was that one which contains a specialist's recommendation. Almost every third tested students advocated ordinary people taking part in TV commercials. The smallest number of interviewees (4.31%) indicated a participation of celebrities in advertisements and 13.79% answered „other" claiming that commercials are not authentic and nothing but personal experience can force them to buy an OTC analgesic.

In opinion of 21.55% of respondents, the most important in a TV commercial is information, while 18.1% think that it is music (18.1%). 16.37% of tested students indicated persons performing in an advertisement and the product. Visual elements are the most noticeable for 15.51%, other elements for 30.17%.

In a view of the most of respondents the most effective way to carry a message in OTC painkillers advertisement is a usage of expert's opinion and scientific evidence (43.96%). Over the 34% of interviewees replied that uniqueness also contributes to the efficacy of a message. Humour was pointed out by 10.34% of tested students, comparison with competitive product and participation of a famous person by 8.6%. None of the respondents answered that shocking motive or "other" factor are the most effective ways to carry a message.

DISCUSSION

Nowadays television is the most important advertisement medium in the world [1]. Combining vision and sound has a very strong impact on the viewer, which definitely raises the level of remembering communication [2]. The factor which decides about effectiveness of this form of advertisement is that currently TV sets are in almost every household, so the advertisers can reach the enormous group of viewers very quickly.

From the psychological point of view advertisement transmission has an assignment to create information in the way which allows affecting addressees' behaviour. A customer must think that this is exactly a product which will follow his needs in the best way. The knowledge about psychology and features of particular viewer are used to achieve this target. It means that advertisement depends on psychological and sociological factors which decide about vulnerability of potential receivers to its transmission. Advertisement message should create a need of possessing particular product in potential buyers, referring to their real or unreal wishes, which results from the rule of learning, way of remembering and motivation which are elements of awareness creating [3].

One of the methods used by advertising senders to influence recipients is persuasion. According to the concept of Richard Petty and John Cacioppo (1985), there are two ways for the change of attitudes: central and peripheral [4]. Basing on the central path requires an accurate and considered information transmission and the number of positive reactions in the viewer is considered as the most effective. A change of attitude depends on arguments and their logical cohesion. The attitude, which was made with central path, has a constant character. Shallow identification of signal

brings positive or negative approach to attitude showed in transmission, which is an indicator of peripheral path. In that case, the viewer does not consider the substantial value of information, but focuses on signals like authority, way of speaking or physical attractiveness of transmission sender. Under the influence of such a signal, received by a recipient as a positive, he can change his attitude to similar one with the content of transmission. This change does not have a lasting character and does not influence later actions of transmission receiver.

Emotions are important elements used in advertisements. Their influence does not only evoke physiological changes. It causes a change of perception, for example, provide a viewer with some kind of joy while watching which results from attractiveness of the advertised product. Emotions contained in advertisement can also reduce the criticism and make easier remembering situations they appear in.

The level in which emotions are expressed by actors performing in advertisement affects emotional cohesion of commercial and advertised product. Connection between possessing a product and emerging advantages is created in a viewer's mind. We can talk about a low cohesion when the expression of emotions and its cause are not connected with the commercial. According to Herbert Krugman (1967), it should build a strong relationship between an advertised product, actors and the transmission receivers to make a commercial transmission effective [5]. Creating a strong relation between the product and a viewer is a final aim of the commercial.

Despite the fact that products or services are usually the subject of advertisements, people starring in advertisements are often very important for the viewers too. The choice of people who should appear in an advertisement mainly depends on philosophy of whole advertisement campaign. Famous people acting in commercial create in consumers a conviction that the promoted product is better than others available on the market. It is connected with positive emotions like admiration, resulting from attractiveness of actors, their behaviours, personality or lifestyle. A consumer believes that by buying certain products he will become like someone famous and will gain the same success. The employment of celebrities and famous people is a popular method which raises effectiveness and efficiency of advertisement [6].

Advertisement producers often present a person acting in a commercial as an expert who specializes in certain domain to obtain a credibility in the viewers' eyes. To achieve this aim they use, for example, a physician's authority which should create trust and at the same time affect consumer's decisions. However, according to CBOS research, 86% of respondents regard advertising of medicines by people purporting as a physicians as inappropriate [7].

CONCLUSIONS

With reference to the competition existing on the pharmaceutical market, promotional instruments which encourage consumers to purchase certain pharmaceutical products have a great meaning for companies which try to dominate other pharmaceutical manufacturers.

TV advertisements is an important promotion tool and a starting point for influencing potential medicines purchasers. To make commercial transmission efficient and to reach as many potential buyers as possible, advertisement creators use, among the others, their knowledge about psychological conditions of a human being.

According to the conducted study, TV commercials have a significant influence on purchasing decisions among Warsaw Medical University students. Of course, students also pay attention to effectiveness of analgesics. An expert's statement and a scientific evidence are factors which contribute to authenticity of advertisement transmission. Results of the research also point out that analgesics are one of the most popular no prescription medicines which is confirmed by information published in a lot of reports on pharmaceutical market, indicating that analgesics consumption is staying on a still, high level.

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