



## A Review on Online Pharmacy is Challenge or Opportunity.

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**Abstract :** Online pharmacy in India is gaining popularity in the people and create new market place for the purchasing of medicines. Online pharmacy directly affect on offline pharmacy due to their home delivery policy. Online pharmacy also offer almost 20 to 25 % discount on purchasing bills, this is also factor affecting part for offline pharmacy. The main motive for this review to understand the challenges creating by online pharmacy. Now a days many mobile application which are used for place the order of medicines. Online pharmacies do not have any restrictions or even geographical boundaries so the chances of misbranded or expiry medicines is increased. Because of this faith regarding to online pharmacy is questionable mark in India. In consideration of offline pharmacy there are enough rules and regulations regarding to their quality of the medicines and also proper distribution channel to authentication of pharmaceutical products. Which may leads to surety of medicines.

**IndexTerms - Pharmacy, Medicines, Prescription.**

### I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, the sell and purchase of materials has been online. Nowadays, Internet is known to be source of health and all information of world. Internet users in India as well as in the world is highly increased in last 10 years. Internet has changed the lifestyle of peoples. In recent studies the most searchable part on internet is, health and health care related materials. In Europe and United States approximately more than half population is serious about their health.

In the present time, people uses internet not only for knowing health information but also to do deep study of self-treatment. The supply of medicine has increased in various countries of world and in conformity with different models in each region of the world. All this development takes place considering and cultural, economic, environment and available resources of that region. As we all know that, online pharmacy are available right now and use in globally. However, regular supply of medicine is increase instantly they can affect the regular supply of medicine and economical condition of that region.

Due to situation of Covid-19, lockdowns and self-isolations online purchasing of medicines increased globally. In Indian market increase of sells is noticed to be 100% and 200%. In old age peoples, online pharmacy use also increased due to chronic disease and this new trends are expected to stay on competition also after pandemic. The rapid growth of the online pharmacy has been largely uncontrolled, and sell of medicine with prescription and without prescription and this factor is related to healthcare. In addition, health related problems and also fraud of customer increase. However, online pharmacy also presents new opportunities for access to medicines online can be instant, easy, convenient and private.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

### II. BENEFITS OF ONLINE PHARMACY :-

- Available in low price or discount rate
- Privacy
- Availability of medical information related data
- Convenience
- Available 24\*7
- Possible price comparison
- Availability of variety

#### ➤ Available in low price or discount rate :-

In online pharmacy medicines are available in different types of discounts and their price is also low. In online purchasing medicine they provide us many offers like when we purchase first time some apps give 25% off with cash back and some apps provides this offer on first 3 order. They also provide free home delivery on orders above 500 rs.

and also provide discount on laboratory test. They also offer plus membership with plan of 1 month, 6 month, 12 month in that plan they consist free delivery, early access to sales, cash back on online payments, free doctor's Teli-consultation, zero convenience fees. In aspect of online pharmacy is indirectly promote the cashless digital India. Which are more helpful for old age patients.<sup>[4]</sup>

➤ **Privacy :-**

In some cases, patients have fear about the privacy regarding diseases, if peoples know about their illness they misbehave with them, e.g. HIV, AIDS etc. In such case online pharmacy is best option to buy medicines, In case of contraceptives. patients have a one kind of fear of community or they fill uncomfortable to buy contraceptives from medical for that reason online pharmacy is best option to buy a contraceptives e.g. Condom, Pills, and other contraceptives etc.<sup>[5]</sup>

➤ **Availability of Medical information related data :-**

The online pharmacy provides detailed information on the use of the medicine, its side effects, its quality, content of ingredient, route of administration, time of administration. In some cases they also give advice to contact with doctor. They provide detailed about side effects with information how to counter side effects. They also gives precaution about who are able to take medicine in some cases, pregnant woman are not able to take some medicine or Allergy patients.<sup>[6]</sup>

➤ **Convenience :-**

Online pharmacy save time of patients, in case of emergency it is very convenient to dispatch the medical in home or in patient department also, Home delivery facility is great achievement for online pharmacy. In such condition patient unable to go for purchasing medicine prefer to order medicine which they want from mobile. Now online pharmacy provides home delivery on rural areas also.<sup>[7]</sup>

➤ **Available 24\*7 :-**

Online pharmacy available 24\*7 on mobile is in hand, we placed order at any time we required, in urban areas people take full benefits of this facility, this kind of facility is very safe regarding the privacy of patients or ladies.

➤ **Possible price comparison :-**

In online pharmacy patient able to compare the variety of products of same configuration, or same drug according to price wise comparison is not possible in retail pharmacy. Price comparison is the right of patient to buy the product in chief price according to Indian economy more than 50 percent peoples are not able to buy costly medicines.<sup>[8]</sup>

➤ **Availability of variety :-**

In consideration of medical field many doctors want specific brands or in other sentence many physician not allowed substitute of product in this case online pharmacy is one of the best choice to buy the medicine without substitute with home delivery, in overall review the basic point of online pharmacy is to available what you want ? and what you need ? which is available in one click.<sup>[9]</sup>

### III. DRAWBACKS OF ONLINE PHARMACY :-

- **Possibility of counterfeiting of medicines**
- **Financial Privacy**
- **Hidden Charges**
- **Possibility of fake prescription**
- **No clear rules and regulation for online pharmacy**
- **Lack of patient counseling**
- **Difficulties in replacement**
- **Server error**
- **Literacy problem**

➤ **Possibility of counterfeiting of medicines :-**

In the online pharmacy we don't know whether the medicine is licensed or not. Sometimes we have doubts regarding to quality of the medicine and if that happens then the counterfeit medicine can kill the patient. Schedule H medicine is not permitted to sale without prescription of doctor so patient can't buy schedule H medicine without prescription online. If patient order schedule H medicine online the chances of fake medicine also increases.<sup>[10]</sup>

➤ **Financial Privacy :-**

In online pharmacy online transaction is regular activity. In that transaction customer pay the bill by online mode. Now a days it is very normal routine process for online trading. but this is quit risky process regarding to financial details. Many cases of fraud in online transaction observed in India. Because every E-pharmacy have their own rules and regulation on app or websites and in online pharmacy patient also shares their financial information to websites or app if any loophole present in system personal information of patient chances of leak.<sup>[11]</sup>

➤ **Hidden Charges :-**

When we purchase medicine online they include delivery charge and now GST charge also included. When a new company enters in the market, they lower the price of the medicine for their advertisement and then gradually

increase the price. Also they change the price of medicine in season like disease eg. In rainy season malaria and dengue like disease are common.<sup>[12]</sup>

➤ **Possibility of fake prescription :-**

Online medicine sales without prescription are not currently permitted in our country so consumers should take advantage of these facilities with caution. Schedule H medicine is not permitted to sale without prescription of doctor so patient can't buy schedule H medicine without prescription online. In case of retail pharmacy, there are various way to authenticate the fake prescription, pharmacist also authenticate the prescription by physically communicate with doctor. But in case of online pharmacy, there are maximize chances to create a fake prescription and it is very difficult task for online pharmacy to authenticate the fake prescription.<sup>[13]</sup>

➤ **No clear rules and regulation for online pharmacy :-**

Online pharmacy rules in India are still in developing level and there are no customized online pharmacy rules in India. The Information Tech. Act 2000 governs some of the admissible issues concerning to online trading but it is silent on the aspect of online pharmacy. This is the big reason of illegal online pharmacies have been enhancing in India.<sup>[14]</sup>

➤ **Lack of patient counseling :-**

Patient counseling play essential role in treatment of patient, which promote the moral and emotional support to the patient. Patient counseling also help to give the information of medication, as well as uses of medication, in consideration of retail pharmacy, there are one kind of opportunities of pharmacist to communicate with patient and resolve the quarries of patient in simple way. This is important but unfortunately impossible part for online pharmacy.<sup>[15]</sup>

➤ **Difficulties in replacement :-**

In case of order replacement or miss guiding cases there are many difficulties arise in pharmaceutical product replacement, there are minimum 5 to 10 days required for the replacement of pharmaceutical product, so this is the time consuming process as well as irritating process for patient in emergency cases. In case of emergency treatment patient required quick medicine to get fast pharmacological effect and relive from their specific diseases. But this is impossible in online pharmacy. In case of cancelation of order there are many difficulties arise in refund.<sup>[16][17]</sup>

➤ **Server error :-**

Some time server of specific software get hanged or hacked, and this kind of problem create tension to the patient. Server problem delay or consuming more time to place the order, and some time it may be quit risky in case of hacking of software may leads to leak the financial information of customer. Some time in case of order placement the product show the stock availability, and after transaction or in period of transaction the product unfortunately show the out off stock and some cases transaction show unsuccessful, but amount deducted from account, it is very irritating process for customer to refund the amount.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

➤ **Literacy problem :-** Many people in rural area of India still uneducated. They are not capable to properly handle the mobile or electronic gadget. In such cases they cant capable to place the order in online application, and chances maximize to misplace the order by mistakenly. In consideration of geographical area of India there are many places are out off network, which may directly impact on online pharmacy.<sup>[20]</sup>

#### IV. CONCLUSION :-

In our brief review of online pharmacy or retail pharmacy we concluded that the retail pharmacy is the base-line of our financial back bone, many online companies having foreign background which indirectly or directly affect our economy, and that negative impact directly shows on retailers, we know their many advantages of online pharmacy but it get diluted with day by day revolution of up-gradation of retailer pharmacy, in case of wellness, M+M medical shops promotes great marginal discount with home delivery facility as like online pharmacy.

Pharmacist can inspiring the patient by discussing the uses of medication, and also give a emotional support to the patient, which play important role in treatment of patient. Pharmacist can also provide use full information of medication and explain it in very simple way to the patient, this kind of valuable service we can't expect from online pharmacy.

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