



DETAILING AND SALES OF PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to examine detailing and sales of drugs by pharmaceutical sales representatives using the University of Benin Teaching Hospital located in Benin City, Nigeria as test case.

The research method was the questionnaire that was used to generate the needed data. Sample size of seventy five(75) medical doctors were conveniently and purposively selected since their job is similar and they are regulated by the same regulatory body. Tables, simple percentages and cross tabulation methods were used in the data analyses. The results from the analyses showed among others that 62(82.7%) of the doctors revealed that pharmaceutical sales representatives provided them with drug information very frequently or frequently; 54(72%) deposited that drug samples from the representatives very frequently or frequently were effective reminder to them on the nature of drugs to prescribe;60(80%) doctors said that the frequent visits of the representatives was between 1-3 times weekly; 56(74.7%) medical practitioners reported that very frequently or frequently drug information made available to them by the representatives were very relevant to their jobs etc.

It was recommended that; pharmaceutical sales representatives should be trained to understand the pros and cons of drugs and such information are to be disseminated to medical practitioners as they interface together; drug samples should be given to doctors to enable them have knowledge of how the drugs works before they are prescribed for usage; frequent visits to doctors by the sales representatives should be encouraged in the environment of stiff competition in the drug industry to achieve selling objectives.

KEY WORDS: Detailing, Sales Representatives, Drugs, Prescription

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of pharmaceutical selling is to meet the healthcare needs of the consumers and consequently make profit. In other products, it is easier for the consumers to make their choice of which brand to purchase but it is not so with pharmaceutical products. In pharmaceutical selling, pharmaceutical representatives does the distribution of products to customers based on prescriptions while the consumers are the patients Gehlbach; Wilkison; Clapp; Finn; Taylor; and Rodells (1984). Koschnick, (1995) defined selling as the special process of influencing a prospective customer to buy a commodity or service or to act positively upon an idea that has commercial significance to the vendor. According to Persson, (1995), personal selling is defined as the vendor's direct communication with one or more potential customers with the intention of closing transaction.

Pharmaceutical detailing on the other hand is a marketing technique used by pharmaceutical companies to educate physician about pharmaceutical or medical product in anticipation that the physician will prescribe the company's product. Detailing is a marketing tactic of providing approved drug information which involves the benefits, dosage, side effects of a drug to physicians by pharmaceutical sales representatives with the aim of persuading the physicians to prescribe the drugs for their patients. Detailing also involves a direct sales tactic in which a trained sales representative uses appropriate promotional materials to persuade a healthcare professional with authority to prescribe or dispense the company's products to their patients.

Pharmaceutical companies spend much money in training their sales force on specialized disease conditions managed by physicians to enable them engage the medical specialists during sales calls Manchanda (2004). According to Donohue (2007), Pharmaceutical firm's investments on sales force training stood at \$25 billion over the last 10 years worldwide. Public policy administrators are disturbed about the societal welfare implications of the aggressive detailing to doctors by pharmaceutical firms. The controlled nature of the pharmaceutical industry has vital consequences for marketing research. The approval process of new drugs, the scientific testing of these drugs, the patent protection system and the form and content of promotion are some the various areas, controls are implemented. During calls, pharmaceutical sales representatives inform the doctors about their company's products and the benefits of the products to persuade the doctors to prescribe these products for their patients. Pharmaceutical firms have adopted different approaches to drug promotion, such as consulting room detailing, end user advertising through television and magazines, and printed materials in journals. Therefore, the objective of the study was to examine detailing and pharmaceutical drug sales in Teaching Hospitals in Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Selling as a macro function in marketing is used in the exchange process between seller and buyer of a product. Marketing is defined as series of actions or steps aimed at identifying what people need, designing goods or services to meet those needs, determining ways of communicating the benefits of the products to potential customers and creating a profitable transaction Smith (2002). Pharmaceutical marketing is a management process that aims at identifying and meeting patients' needs profitably Olszewska and Chemik (2006). Research finding by the World Health Organisation suggests that doctors' attitude to detailing differs and do not necessarily match their behaviour. Most doctors think that medical information from sales representatives are biased while many think that they are useful World Health Organization (2005).

Drug firms are using a wide range of marketing strategies to inform and convince physicians about their products. Sales representative is considered the most expensive and widely used marketing strategy Schramm (2007). Drug firms promote their products by employing the services of sales representatives, adoption of sampling tactics, drug leave behind and gifts as attempt to induce the adoption of their drugs for disease management by Physicians (Schramm,2007). Drug firms ensure that their brands remain uppermost in the mind of doctors by branding the gift items. Marketing strategies used by Pharmaceutical representatives in marketing their products and the value of evidence provided in emerging countries is poor compared to advanced nations (Smith, 2002). The physicians plays important role in deciding which pharmaceutical brand is appropriate for patient's condition so the main focus of the pharmaceutical industry is to influence the decision making process of physicians through promotion (Zigler 1995). Despite the fact that most physicians have not noticed this influence, it is needless to say that pharmaceutical representatives have a substantial impact on their prescription practice and selection of drugs (Zigler, 1995). A study by Kisa (2006), revealed that physicians have a tendency for irrational prescription by showing more favourable attitudes towards certain pharmaceutical companies, preference for newer and more expensive drugs. It is believed that drug promotion is one of the conditions that lead to prescription of expensive drugs in their brand names although the National Drug Policy of Nigeria encourages generic prescription (Kisa,2006).

According to Zigler (1995), Pharmaceutical sales representatives are trained in persuading physicians, while detailing takes the form of presenting facts. Physicians can rely on the information and change their prescription practices accordingly. Pharmaceutical sales representatives can induce trial of new drugs to the extent that they may be the main channel of information dissemination about new and old drugs. The use of samples facilitates this process. Pharmaceutical sales

representatives are not the only source of information about drugs for physicians. Scientific papers, advice from colleagues, and a physician's experience also influence prescription practices. Most physicians view these other influences as far more important than that of pharmaceutical sales representatives (Zigler, 1995). Peay and Peay (1990), reported that out of fifteen potential information sources about drugs, physicians rated pharmaceutical sales representatives, twelfth in usefulness. It is not that pharmaceutical sales representative do not provide information, rather, the consideration is that other sources of drug information are relied on much more frequently than drug information from the pharmaceutical sales representative. Pharmaceutical sales representatives' influence is limited by the fact that many physicians view sceptically or hold negative attitudes towards pharmaceutical representatives (Lichstein, Tuner, & O'Brien, 1992; Mckinley, 1990).

Physicians recognize that pharmaceutical sales representatives are neither experts nor necessarily trustworthy and realize that information presented is biased toward the promoted drugs and is unlikely to be objective or even accurate Connelly (1990). Thus, physicians are likely to discountenance information received from pharmaceutical representatives since physicians have access to alternative sources of information, which are more highly regarded (Connelly,1990).

PRESCRIPTION PATTERN IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

A prescription is consent from an authorized prescriber for a patient to purchase a prescribed drug from a pharmacist, for the benefit of the patient. Prescription behaviour of physicians can be affected by a number of elements, Grimshaw (2002). Kisa (2006), reported in his study that 75% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that doctors working in the same health facility are influenced by their superiors when selecting drugs Campo (2005). He established that the Physicians' strong need for fast, and up to date medical information were leading factors in pharmaceutical marketing decisions and for this reason, detailing is one of the prime marketing instrument to influence physicians prescription behavior (Ferrari, Gentile, Davalos, Huanayay & Malaga 2014). The purpose of pharmaceutical marketing by pharmaceutical companies is to increase the use of their products by consumers. Consumers purchase drugs to treat diseases and the brand of drugs to purchase is determined by the Physician and this fact is crucial to pharmaceutical companies. Promotional strategies for Pharmaceutical companies are planned and executed on this premise of the physician's behaviour towards their drugs.

Detailing by pharmaceutical sales force has been found to have a lasting effect on physicians prescription behaviour Gonul and Srinivasan(2001). The importance of pharmaceutical sales force is measured by the quality of information communicated during their sales calls where they have

limited detailing time. Physicians prescription behaviour is dependent on patient need which is influenced by pharmaceutical marketing activities such as detailing, features and benefits of new or already existing drugs, physicians samples, branded gift items, sponsorships to conferences and so on, to get the prescription response from the physicians Campo (2005).

PROMOTION IN THE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

A very important element in pharmaceutical innovation is the transfer of medical information from pharmaceutical firms to Physicians Deamer (1994). Advertising by pharmaceutical companies have effect on physicians' prescription behaviour (Deamer, 1994). He also said that huge amount of money is spent annually on drug advertising and marketing by pharmaceutical firms. The pharmaceutical industry holds the leading edge as the most intensive advertising industry, where, sometimes advertising cost exceed expenditures on research and development Brekke and Kuhn (2006). Petroschius, Titus, and Hatch (2005), reported that by and large, Physicians are favourably disposed to the advertisement of pharmaceutical products. Pharmaceutical companies adopt a multidimensional approach to promoting their drugs, using personal selling, sales representatives, direct-to-consumer advertising through television and magazines, and printed materials in journals.

Another promotion strategy adopted by pharmaceutical companies is the use of giveaway samples, though little is known about how this strategy affects the prescription behaviour of Physicians (Deamer, 1994). There exist contradictory opinions on drug sampling by pharmaceutical companies. Physicians can start treatment immediately with the use of drug samples, they can also evaluate the efficacy or benefits to the patients. In contrast, drug samples promote neglect of evidence-based treatment guidelines. In addition, handing out of drug samples to patients prevent them from proper pharmacy counselling and identification drug interaction. There is also the fear of resale of the drug samples by health care workers. Some health institutions have established guiding principles to promote proper use of samples (Deamer, 1994).

Health organizations have been advised to develop benchmarks on the storage, labelling and distribution of drug samples. While some health organizations ban drug samples, others place no limits on their use. Study by Deamer (1994), submitted that the availability of drug samples may cause rise in the prescription of sampled drugs by prescribers. It was reported that over 15,000 pharmaceutical sales representatives carry out over 20 million visits to medical practices and hospitals in Germany annually Deamer (1994). In these visits, pharmaceutical sales representatives provide doctors with information on companies' products (Goyal & Pareek, 2013). Study by Avorn, Chen, and Hartley (1982,) showed that interaction between doctors and pharmaceutical companies

is linked with more frequent prescriptions, higher expenditure and lesser prescription quality (Deamer,1994; Berman & Ahari,2007).

PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING

Pharmaceutical marketing is a steady information component in which investigation theories are transformed into therapeutic tools and are useful to the health care sector Deamer (1994). Pharmaceutical marketing are activities aimed at prescribers and patients to know about new and existing drug brands. Pharmaceutical marketing is a management process that aims at identifying and meeting patients' need profitably Olszewska and Chemik (2006). Furthermore, they said that Pharmaceutical marketing involves adoption of give-away samples, drug literature, disease awareness programmes aimed at identifying patients with particular needs that can be served profitably by the drug company. Some companies producing blood pressure lowering and cholesterol lowering drugs, organize cardiovascular screening exercise, aimed at identifying patients with hypertension and high cholesterol that can benefit from their medications. This type of marketing programmes create a pool of patients that can be served by this drug companies though the prescribers are paid to run such disease awareness programmes (Doran,Kerridge, McNeil, & Henry, 2006).

World Health Organization (WHO) explained that drug promotion is a persuasive action by drug firms to induce prescription, dispensing, purchase and use of medicinal drugs WHO(1986). Pharmaceutical marketing helps physicians to make informed choice, matching drug therapy to patient needs. The enormous marketing cost incurred by pharmaceutical firms shows the intensity of the effort required to carry out this important exercise. The Pharmaceutical sales representatives requires thorough training and an extensive support infrastructure (Lieb & Scheurich,2014). The expenses associated with this marketing strategy can be taking care of by resultant savings primarily through price competition among similar products and proper use of the promoted drugs. Promotion is a key communication channel for physicians education regarding pharmaceuticals products WHO (1986). Physicians are not likely to know about new drugs unless drug firms make them available and accessible (Aibersheim & Golan,2011. Direct access to the medical literature is difficult and time consuming for practicing physicians, and many physicians value and respect company promotional efforts in the forms of detail calls, product information, symposia and patient information materials (Braithwaite, 1986). Drug information from pharmaceutical companies serves as an effective and comprehensive system for notifying physicians about the efficacy, side-effects and availability of medicines (Braithwaite,1986).

METHODOLOGY

The research design employed for the study was the survey method through the use of research questionnaire. The population of study were all the physicians in University of Benin Teaching Hospital located in Benin City. A sample size of seventy five(75) Medical Doctors were conveniently and purposively selected for the study. The justification for the population and sample size hinged on the fact that the duties and responsibilities of doctors are similar and are regulated by the Nigeria Medical Association(NMA) and the ministry of health. Tables, simple percentages and cross tabulation methods were used in the analyses because of the precision and readability of results.

All questionnaires administered were retrieved and found usable.

DATA ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Table 1: Gender of respondents

| Gender | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Male | 37 | 49.3 | 49.3 | 49.3 |
| Female | 38 | 50.7 | 50.7 | 50.7 |
| Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table 1 above revealed that 37(49.3%) of the total respondents were male doctors while 38(50.7%) were female doctors.

Table 2: Work experience of respondents

| Years | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Less than 5 years | 22 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 29.3 |
| 6-10 years | 40 | 53.3 | 53.3 | 53.3 |
| More than 10 years | 13 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 17.3 |
| Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Field survey (2017).

From Table 2, it could be gleaned that 22(29.3%) of the respondents had work experience of less than five(5) years, 40(53.3%) had work experience of between 6 and 10 years and 13(17.3%) had work experience of 10 years and above.

Table 3: Status of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid General practitioners | 22 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 29.3 |
| Resident | 40 | 53.3 | 53.3 | 53.3 |
| Specialist | 13 | 17.3 | 17.3 | 17.3 |
| Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table 3 above revealed that 22(29.3%) of the total respondents were general medical practitioners, 40(53.3%) were resident doctors and 13(17.3%) were specialists.

Table4: Frequency with which Pharmaceutical representatives provided drug information to medical practitioners

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid VF | 36 | 48 | 48 | 48 |
| F | 26 | 34.7 | 34.7 | 34.7 |
| U | 4 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| NVF | 9 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 |

Source: Field survey (2017).

VF Very frequent

F Frequent

U Undecided

NVF Not Very Frequent

From Table 4 above, it was found that 36(48%) of the respondents agreed that pharmaceutical representatives very frequently supplied them drugs information, 26(34.7%) said that they frequently received drugs information from pharmaceutical representatives, 4(5.3%) were undecided and 9(12%) reported that they did not very frequently received drugs information from pharmaceutical representatives.

Table 5: Drug sample as an effective reminder during prescription

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | VF | 32 | 42.7 | 42.7 | 42.7 |
| | F | 22 | 29.3 | 29.3 | 29.3 |
| | U | 9 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| | NVF | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| | NF | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| | Total | 75 | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Field survey (2017).

VF Very Frequently

F Frequently

U Undecided

NVF Not Very Frequently

NF Not Frequently

Table 5 above posited that 32(42.7%) of the respondents said that drug samples to doctors very frequently served as effective reminder during prescriptions to patients, 22(29.3%) agreed that drug samples from pharmaceutical representatives frequently serves as effective reminder to them during drug prescriptions, while 9(12%) were undecided. 6(8%) reported that drug samples did not very frequently served as effective reminder to them during drug prescriptions and 6(8%) also said that drug samples were not effective reminder during prescriptions.

Table 6: Frequent Visits from pharmaceutical representatives and Drug prescription decision by physicians

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-----|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | VF | 35 | 46.7 | 46.7 | 46.7 |
| | F | 25 | 33.3 | 33.3 | 33.3 |
| | U | 8 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.7 |
| | NVF | 4 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| | NF | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Total | | 75 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Field survey (2017).

From Table 6, 35(46.7%) reported that their drug prescription decisions were very frequently affected by frequent visits of pharmaceutical representatives, 25(33.3%) said that they were frequently affected and 8(10.7%) were undecided. 4(5.3%) agreed that they were not very frequently affected while 3(4%) said that they were not frequently affected.

Table 7: Pharmaceutical sales representatives and relevance of information

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Very relevant | 36 | 48 | 48 | 48 |
| Relevant | 20 | 26.7 | 26.7 | 26.7 |
| Neutral | 4 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| Not very relevant | 7 | 9.3 | 9.3 | 9.3 |
| Not relevant | 8 | 10.7 | 10.7 | 10.3 |
| Total | 75 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Field survey (2017).

From Table 7above, 36 (48%) said that information from pharmaceutical sales representatives is very relevant to their jobs and 20(26.7%) reported that information provided by pharmaceutical representatives is relevant to them as physicians while 4(5.3%) were neutral. On the other hand 7(9.3%) revealed that information from pharmaceutical sales representatives is not very relevant to them while 8(10.7%) said that such information is relevant to their jobs.

Table 8: Frequency of visits by Pharmaceutical sales representatives

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid 2-3 times weekly | 40 | 53.3 | 53.3 | 53.3 |
| once weekly | 19 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 25.3 |
| Occasionally | 16 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 21.3 |
| Total | 75 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table8 displayed the frequency of visits by pharmaceutical sales representatives to the physicians and respondents. 40(53.3%) of the respondents reported that pharmaceutical sales representatives

made visits of 2-3 times weekly while 19(25.3%) said that pharmaceutical sales representatives paid visit once a week and 16(21.3%) revealed that their visit was occasional.

Table 9: Cross tabulation of work experience versus Pharmaceutical representatives as source of drug information

| Work experience | | Pharm. Rep. as source of drug information | | | | Total |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---|-------|------|-------|-------|
| | | VF | F | U | NVF | |
| Less than 5 years | Count | 10 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 22 |
| | % within Work experience | 48% | 34.7% | 5.3% | 12% | |
| 6-10 years | Count | 19 | 14 | 2 | 5 | 40 |
| | % within Work experience | 47.5% | 35% | 5% | 12.5% | |
| More than 10 years | Count | 6.2 | 4.5 | 0.7 | 1.6 | 13 |
| | % within Work experience | 47.7% | 34.6% | 5.4% | 12.3% | |
| Total | Count | 36 | 26 | 4 | 9 | 75 |
| | % within Work experience | | | | | |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table 9 showed the cross tabulation of Work experience and pharmaceutical representatives as a source of drug information to physicians. It was revealed that 10 (48%) respondents with less than 5 years working experience agreed that pharmaceutical sales representatives very frequently provided drug information to them, 8(34.7%) reported that pharmaceutical sales representatives frequently provided drug information to them and 1(5.3%) was undecided. 3(12%) noted that the sales representatives were not very frequently a source of drug information to them. 19(47.5%) who possessed between 6-10 years work experience said that pharmaceutical sales representatives were a source of drug information to them very frequently, 14(35%) opined that the sales representatives were frequently a source of drug information to them and 2(5%) were undecided. 5(12.5%) of the respondents reported that pharmaceutical sales representatives were not very frequently a source of drug information to them. On the other hand, 6(47.7%) with work experience of more than 10

years reported that the sales representatives very frequently provided drug information to them, 4(34.6%) agreed that the sales representatives were a source of drug information to them while 1(5.4%) was undecided. 2(12.3%) revealed that pharmaceutical sales representatives did not very frequently provide drug information to them.

Table 10 Cross tabulation of Gender and Pharmaceutical sales representatives as source of drug information

| Gender of Physicians | | Pharm. Sales Rep. as source of drug information | | | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------|---|-------|------|-------|-------|
| | | VF | F | U | NVF | |
| Male | Count | 17 | 15 | 1 | 3 | 37 |
| | % within Gender | 46% | 40.5% | 2.7% | 8.1% | |
| Female | Count | 18 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 38 |
| | % within Gender | 47.4% | 39.5% | 2.6% | 10.5% | |
| Total | Count | 35 | 30 | 3 | 7 | 75 |
| | % within Gender | 46.7% | 40% | 4% | 9.3% | |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table 10 displayed the cross tabulation of gender of respondents and pharmaceutical sales representatives as source of drug information. From the table, 17(46%) of the male respondents reported that very frequently the sales representatives provided them with drug information, 15(40.5%) said that frequently the sales representatives provided them with drug information and 1(2.7%) was neutral. 18(47.4%) of the female respondents agreed that very frequently the sales representatives were a source of drug information to them, 15(39.5%) of the female doctors said that the sales representatives frequently provided them with drug information, 1(2.6%) was neutral and 4(10.5%) revealed that the sales representatives did not very frequently provide drug information to them.

Table 11 Cross tabulation of Gender and Drug sample as effective prescription reminder

| | | | Drug sample as most effective reminder | | | | | Total |
|-------------|-----------------|--|--|-------|-------|------|------|--------|
| | | | VF | F | U | NVF | NF | |
| Gender Male | Count | | 16 | 11 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 37 |
| | % within Gender | | 43.2% | 29.7% | 10.8% | 8.1% | 8.1% | |
| Female | Count | | 16 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 3 | |
| | % within Gender | | 42.1% | 28.9% | 13.1% | 7.9% | 7.9% | 38 |
| Total | Count | | 32 | 22 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 75 |
| | % within Gender | | 42.7% | 29.3% | 12% | 8% | 8% | 100.0% |

Source: Field survey (2017).

Table 11 showcased the cross tabulation of gender of respondents and drug sample as prescription reminder to doctors. 16(43.2%) male respondents agreed that very frequently drug sample was an effective reminder to them during prescription, 11(29.7%) deposited that frequently drug sample was an effective reminder during drug prescription and 4(10.8%) were undecided. 3(8.1%) male respondents reported that drug samples was not very frequently and not frequently respectively an effective reminder to them during prescription. On the other hand, 16(42.1%) female doctors said that very frequently drug sample was an effective reminder to them during prescription, 11(28.9%) doctors agreed that frequently drug sample was an effective reminder to them as presented to them by pharmaceutical sales representatives and 5(13.1%) of the doctors were undecided. 3(7.9%) doctors each reported that drug sample was not very frequently and not frequently respectively an effective reminder to them.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Sequel to the analyses, it was found among others that 62(82.7%) of the total respondents of 75 deposited that pharmaceutical sales representatives very frequently or frequently provided them with drug information. This finding is in line with the research work by Albersheim & Golan (2011) on the “physicians relationship with the pharmaceutical industry” where similar discovery was made. Unarguably, pharmaceutical sales representatives are in a position to provide the relevant drug information to the doctors who are not the manufacturers of the drugs. In the same vein, it was also found that 54(72%) of the respondents reported that very frequently or frequently that drug sample given to them by pharmaceutical sales representatives was an effective drug reminder to them during drug prescription. This discovery corroborates the finding by Berman & Aharis(2007) on “following the script: How drug representatives make friends and influences doctors”. It was also

found that 60(80%) of the sampled doctors submitted that very frequently or frequently their prescription pattern was affected by the visits of pharmaceutical sales representatives. This supports the work of Ferrari, Gentile, Davalos, Huayanag & Malaga (2014) on the topic “attitudes and relationships between physicians and the pharmaceutical industry in a public general hospital” in Lima Peru.

Furthermore, it was also found that 56(74.7%) of the respondents revealed that information from pharmaceutical sales representatives was very relevant or relevant to their jobs as physicians. This agreed with the finding of Goyal & Pareek(2013) on the subject “ Prescription behaviour of doctors influenced by the medical representatives” in Rajasthan India. Similarly, it was discovered that 59(78.6%) of the doctors said that pharmaceutical sales representatives very frequently or frequently paid them visits between 1-3 times weekly. This is in line with the finding by Lieb & Scheurich(2014) on “contact between doctors and the pharmaceutical industry, their perceptions and the effects on prescription habits”. In the same direction, on cross tabulation,32(86.5%) out of the 37 male doctors sampled agreed that the sales representatives provided them drug information very frequently or frequently while 33(86.9%) out of 38 female doctors gave similar report. Also, 27 male and 27 female doctors submitted that drug sample was an effective reminder to them on the type of drugs to prescribe among others.

CONCLUSION

Detailing and the prescription behaviour of medical practitioners were examined with specific focus in the University of Benin Teaching Hospital. No doubt, the activities of the pharmaceutical sales representatives compliments the jobs of the medical practitioners while at the same time the selling objectives of the sales representatives are realised through the patronage of the doctors. The doctors needs drugs to administer to their patients and it is through the interface between the doctors and the sales representatives that the needed drugs can be made available to them and other necessary information. The stiff competition in the pharmaceutical industry put pressure on the sales representatives to pay frequent visits to the premises of the doctors in order to display the drugs to them who are responsible to prescribe drugs to customers before they are bought and used. In summary, the symbiotic relationship between the doctors and the pharmaceutical sales representatives is a healthy one and it is encouraged to continue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a consequence of the data analyses and the accompanying results, the following recommendations are made:

1. The pharmaceutical sales representatives should be trained to understand the pros and cons of drugs and such information are to be disseminated to doctors as they interface together.
2. Drug samples are to be given to doctors to enable them have knowledge of how the drugs works before they are prescribed to patients.
3. It is strongly recommended that frequent visits to doctors by the sales representatives should be maintained in the environment of stiff competition to achieve their selling objectives.

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SECTION A

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION,

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN,

BENIN-CITY, EDO STATE

A QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE IMPACT OF DETAILING AND SAMPLING ON PHYSICIANS' PRESCRIPTION PATTERNS.

Dear Respondents,

I am Agbo Okechukwu Luke a student of the above named institution. This questionnaire is being administered to enable me gather relevant information on the above topic. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as objectively as possible. You are being assured that the information you provide will be used strictly for research purpose.

Thanking you for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours Faithfully,

Agbo, Okechukwu Luke.

Section B: Demography

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age bracket

20-30

31-40

41-50

51-60

Above 60

3. Marital status

Single

Married

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

4. Work experience

Less than 5yrs

6 – 10 years

More than 10 years

5. Qualification

General practitioners

Resident

Specialist

Section C

Kindly select the options that most agree with your views by indicating the extent to which you agree. Please, the options and their respective acronyms you should tick [V] from are as follows: VF= Very Frequently, F= Frequently, U= Undecided, NVF= Not Very Frequently; and NF= Not Frequently.

| S/N | QUESTIONS | Answers and Option | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------|---|---|-----|----|
| | | VF | F | U | NVF | NF |
| Main source of drug information? | | | | | | |
| | Pharmaceutical representatives | | | | | |
| | Symposiums | | | | | |
| | Medical magazines | | | | | |
| | Journals | | | | | |
| | Internet | | | | | |
| | Media advertisement | | | | | |
| Most effective "Reminder" methods? | | | | | | |
| | Pharmaceutical sales representative | | | | | |
| | Drug (Product) Samples | | | | | |
| | Brochures | | | | | |
| | Pens with company logo | | | | | |
| | Note books with company logo | | | | | |
| Factors that affect Physicians' drug selection decisions? | | | | | | |
| | Visits from Pharmaceutical reps | | | | | |
| | Patients financial situation | | | | | |
| | Colleagues | | | | | |
| | Product price | | | | | |
| | Availability of samples | | | | | |
| Most effective Pharmaceutical promotional method? | | | | | | |
| | Visits from Pharmaceutical representatives | | | | | |
| | Drug (Product) sampling | | | | | |
| | Pharmaceutical representatives phone calls | | | | | |
| | Clinical meetings | | | | | |
| Preferred venue for Pharmaceutical representative visits? | | | | | | |
| | Consulting room | | | | | |
| | Ward | | | | | |
| | Office | | | | | |

Section D

1. Pharmaceutical representatives' visits have an influence on my prescribing behaviour?

Agree []

Disagree []

Neither agree nor disagree []

2. Pharmaceutical representatives provide a convenient way to get drug (product) information?

Agree []

Disagree []

Neither agree nor disagree []

3. Pharmaceutical representatives provide highly relevant information

Agree []

Disagree []

Neither agree nor disagree []

4. In your opinion what is the ideal frequency of visits per week by Pharmaceutical representatives?

Daily []

2 – 3 times weekly []

Once weekly []

Occasionally []

Never []

5. I will prescribe drugs after using drug (Product) samples?

Agree []

Disagree []

Neither agree nor disagree []

6. I will give a drug (Product) sample different from my drug of choice for the same indication?

Agree []

Disagree []

Neither agree nor disagree []