

## **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The aim of the study is to examine influence of knowledge, attitude and practice on medical practitioners' behavior towards generic drugs limiting its mass use. Most of the countries in the world, rich or poor, are taking more interest in generic medicines due to rising healthcare costs. Aside from the high out-of-pocket healthcare expenditures in India, affordability is also a challenge due to its demographics. Generic medicines offer an alternative to expensive medicines. Government is promoting use of generic medicines; doctors are being advised to prescribe medicines in generic names, however, there are several challenges in its mass use. The study is of national importance as it addresses the issue of low generic prescriptions despite unaffordable access to expensive branded medicines.

**Objective & Methodology:** The purpose of the research is to understand relationship between knowledge / attitude / practice and prescription of generic medicines by the doctors and bring forth suggestions including marketing aspects of generic medicines that the pharmaceutical companies need to take into consideration that may lead to increase in prescribing of generic medicines.

A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted by means of self-administered questionnaire among 228 medical practitioners working in primary, secondary, and tertiary care centers of Dehradun district in 2020. The questionnaire designed for the study included seven items related to knowledge, eleven items related to attitude, seventeen items related to practice and one item related to prescribing of generic medicines in Likert-type scale. The sample data was compiled in excel and analyzed

using SPSS 25. P values of  $\leq 0.05$  for the dataset were considered to indicate statistical significance in hypothesis testing.

**Findings:** Spearman's rank correlation coefficient amongst other statistical test were computed to assess the statistical significance between the variables in answering the research questions such as:

*“Does knowledge of generic medicines play a significant role in influencing doctors in prescribing generic medicines?”*

*“Does attitude toward generic medicines play a significant role in influencing medical practitioners in recommending generic medicines?”*

*“Do doctors' practices influence their prescription behavior towards generic medicines?”*

*“Is there any difference in practice of prescribing generic medicines amongst doctors serving at primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare centers?”*

*“Does knowledge (cognitive) of generic medicine, attitude (affective) towards generic medicines and practice (conative) have a significant influence on doctors in prescribing generic medicines?”*

Correlation was found to be positive between knowledge and prescription,  $r = .411$ ,  $N = 227$ ,  $p < .001$ , between attitude and prescription,  $r = .431$ ,  $N = 224$ ,  $p < .001$ , between practice and prescription,  $r = .450$ ,  $N = 221$ ,  $p < .001$  indicating significant moderate association between knowledge / attitude / practice and prescription of generic medicines in doctors. Thus, the findings support knowledge, attitude and

practice amongst medical practitioners play a significant role in influencing them in prescribing less of generic medicines.

Statistical significant difference was found in knowledge of generic medicines amongst doctors in different age groups (<30, 31-40,41-50, 51-60, >60), amongst doctors in different levels of education (UG, PG-Diploma/Degree, Post-PG Degree), amongst doctors having non-surgical and surgical practice. With regards to attitude, statistical significant difference was found amongst doctors in different employment status (self-employed, Govt. hospital, Private hospital). Statistical significant difference was also found in practice of prescribing generic medicines amongst doctors serving primary, secondary and tertiary healthcare centers.

It may be concluded with the findings from the study that knowledge, attitude and practice amongst medical practitioners influences them in recommending less of generic drugs. Not much prescription of generic drugs from private doctors can be explained by overall insufficient knowledge of generic drugs, attitude towards generic drugs and practice that favors recommending branded medicines.

The findings support the tricomponent model that the knowledge (cognitive) of generic medicine, attitude (affective) towards generic medicines and practice (conative) by doctors have a significant influence on them in recommending medicines.

**Keywords:** generic medicines, generic drugs, brands, knowledge, attitude, practice, prescription, consumers, patients, doctors, prescribers, pharmacists, chemists, dispensation, issues, government policy