

CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS AYURVEDIC MEDICINES / PRODUCTS IN JOGINDER NAGAR - A SURVEY

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Abstract

The objective of this research survey was to study the consumer behavior in consuming/purchasing Ayurvedic medicines/products and their attitudes toward herbal medicines in Joginder Nagar region of Himachal Pradesh, India. The data are predominantly compiled by face to face conversation, based on the questionnaire, with sample of 500 consumers at distinct places of Joginder Nagar. The consumers were interviewed using a structured interview questionnaire. The findings revealed that 64.8% of the consumers preferred Ayurvedic medicines in comparison with Allopathic (32.6%), Homeopathic (1.8%), Unani (0.8%) medication/therapy. In terms of reliability 73.6% consumers purchased the Ayurvedic medicines. 78.4% consumers bought the Ayurvedic health/food supplements or Rejuvenating Ayurvedic medicines for health prevention or to complement their health. Furthermore, the advertisements had affirmative impact on consumers (59.6%). Many of the consumers have firm mind set of selective brand like Dabur (44.8%), (19.2%), and Himalaya (17.2%). Many of them (77.4%) are habitual consumer of Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of common ailments like common cold, cough, allergy, constipation, joint pain, hair fall but most of consumers (73.2%) consume Ayurvedic medicines without Doctor's prescription. 37.2% Consumers consume Ayurvedic medicines along with allopathic, homeopathic medicine for treating prevalent diseases. On the other hand most groups of the consumers (72.6%) are very desirous towards the usage of Ayurvedic cosmetic preparation.

Keywords: Ayurvedic Medicine; Joginder Nagar; Consumers.

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INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda means "knowledge of life" and is about 5,000 years old traditional Indian system of medicine. Ayurveda is a system, which

avail the essential fundamentals of nature, to maintain health in a person by preserving the individual's mind, body and spirit in adept equanimity with nature. Natural remedies have immense applications globally. Unique

therapy such as Ayurvedic Panchakarma, Aromatherapy, Acupressure/acupuncture, Homeopathy, Chinese Traditional therapies, etc have been few of the most sought after treatment ways due to rapidly expanding hazards of modern medicines^[1-6].

Joginder Nagar is situated at north-east corner at an average 3,314 feet, located in the north-western ranges of the Himalayas 31.98°N, 76.77°E surrounded by mountains on all sides. Joginder Nagar is a town and nagar panchayat in Mandi district in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Named after Raja Joginder Sen, Joginder Nagar is terminal point of 163 km long Kangra Valley narrow gauge railhead.^[7-8] Ayurvedic hub (Joginder Nagar) is surrounded by various educational institutions/research centers like Herbal garden (cultivations, collection, procurement, identification, authentication, preservation various herbarium samples including endangered species, marketing and supply of herbal drugs to Ayurvedic manufacturing units), Ayurvedic pharmacy (manufacturing of herbal drugs), Drug testing lab. (Qualitative and quantitative analysis of herbal drugs), Ayurvedic hospital (Intensive/general care of patients using Ayurvedic therapy/medicines). Joginder Nagar is packed with clinics, pharmacies and hospitals. In terms of quantity, people have easy access to health services, mainly Ayurvedic, Allopathic and Homeopathic. To know the behavior of consumers towards the Ayurvedic medication/products, this survey have been conducted in Joginder Nagar.

Study area:

Numerous studies have been regulated on consumer behavior in the use of Ayurvedic

medicine/products or herbal drugs in several areas. However, no studies have been conducted on Ayurvedic drug/medicine on consumption behavior of consumers. In Joginder Nagar, drug stores are available in sufficient numbers and are visited by bulk of consumers. If these consumers have disproportionate drug purchasing behavior or have improper decision making process of purchasing drug, they will obtain low quality Ayurvedic drug/medicine which are unsafe, and the consumer's health may be at risk. Because of this, we (authors) were interested in studying the Ayurvedic/herbal drug purchasing/buying behavior of consumers in Joginder Nagar region.

The present investigation has been carried out at Joginder Nagar region of Himachal Pradesh, India. For proper and orderly study; the study sites were selected considering the population and density of area. Direct discussions with different consumers/informants were made and their views were recorded. About 15 villages of Joginder Nagar namely Kupper, Ahju, Dwelu, Jalpehar, Dohag, Shanan, Seri, Approach road, Graru, Dul, Chauntra, Balkrupi, Sainthal and Prain, Odder (Bassi), Makrana etc. were authentically surveyed by B.Pharm (Ay.) students of the Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Sciences, Joginder Nagar, Mandi, H.P.

Methodology:

The present study was a descriptive research conducted between Sept.2011-May 2012 (8 months). The study comprises of several selected questions (to be asked from consumers randomly) (Table 1) about their buying behavior towards Ayurvedic medicine/product in Joginder Nagar.

Table 1: Questionnaire

| Sl. No. | Question | Yes | No |
|---------|--|-----|----|
| 1. | Do you use Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of common diseases like common cold, cough, allergy etc.? | | |
| 2. | Do you use Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of major diseases like diabetes, arthritis, bronchial asthma, tuberculosis, migraine, depression etc.? | | |
| 3. | Do you consume Ayurvedic medicines on Doctor’s prescription or taking it on ours own? | | |
| 4. | According to you which medication is better? A) AYURVEDIC B) ALLOPATHIC C) HOMEOPATHIC D)UNANI E) OTHER | | |
| 5. | Are advertisements of Ayurvedic Products/medicines have some impact on you ? | | |
| 6. | Are Ayurvedic Medicine have some side effect on your health/body? | | |
| 7. | Do you consume Ayurvedic medicine along with allopathic, homeopathic medicine for treating common disease? | | |
| 8. | Do you use some herbal cosmetic product? | | |
| 9. | Which is your favourite Ayurvedic brand/ company? A) DABUR B) ZHANDU C) BAIDYANATH D) HIMALAYA E) OTHER | | |
| 10. | Are Ayurvedic Medicines reliable to your pocket? | | |
| 11. | Do you consume some Ayurvedic health/food supplements or Rejuvenating Ayurvedic medicines? | | |

Sample Size:

n=500 (where n = no. of respondents)

Selecting the research method-The primary data contains collection of questionnaire filled by B.Pharma (Ayurveda) students (30 students divided into 5 groups; 6 students per group, Fig.1) from 500 consumers/households as a sample to represent the entire consumers/households of Joginder Nagar region.

Data collection:

Data collection was done in one stage only; in the present study the primary data was collected from consumers (about 500 consumers with in age group of 15-75 yr.) After collecting the data the next important phase was to evaluate the data. Finally interpretation of the data was done to arrive at the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

77.4% (n=387) of consumers consume Ayurvedic medicine for treatment of common/prevalent diseases like common cold,

cough, constipation, allergy etc. This concludes that Ayurvedic medicine was mostly consumed by consumers for prevalent diseases. Ayurveda is not just a treatment, rather a lifestyle; a lifestyle which has ascertain ways of eating habits, meditative practices and herbal medications when fallen sick. Human body is prone to diverse infections and ailments anytime due to polluted atmosphere and increased bacterial spread levels. It is quite common that people often periodically or frequently gets infected with one or other bacteria or virus. Ayurveda has prescribed several simple homemade medications to prevent and fight such common ailments.

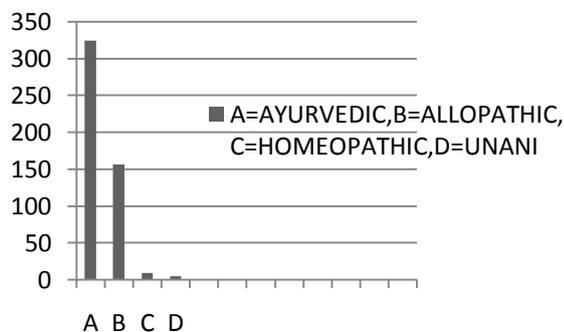
26.6% (n=133) consumers taking Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of major diseases like diabetes, arthritis, bronchial asthma, tuberculosis, migraine, depression etc. (The other 73.4% (n=386) consumers refused to take Ayurvedic medicine because, they don’t know about the diseases and the effect of Ayurvedic medicine on these diseases. Traditional systems of medicines involving use of herbs have been used throughout the world from centuries. Plants (herbs, shrubs, trees) have been the authentic source for most

of the drugs. Medicinal plants contain so many phytoconstituents (alkaloids, glycosides, tannins, flavonoids, resins, terpenoids) which are the major source of ameliorative agents to treat human diseases. Recent discovery and advancement in medicinal and aromatic plants have lead to the enhancement of health care of mankind [1].

73.2% (n=366) of people consume medicine without consulting Physician. These data shows that the people of Joginder nagar are interested in the OTC (over the counter) products of Ayurveda because they are much influenced by the advertisement given by various Ayurvedic manufacturing companies (Dabur, Himalaya, Zandu etc.)

64.8%, n=324 of the subjects preferred Ayurvedic medicines in comparison with Allopathic (32.6%, n=156), Homeopathic (1.8%, n=9), Unani (0.8%, n=4) medication (Graph 1). Ayurveda is the most extensively practiced system of medicine of the Indian traditional medicine systems, but there are others such as Siddha and Unani which are also practiced in the Indian subcontinent.

Graph 1: Consumer consumes Ayurvedic medicine along with allopathic, homeopathic medicine for treating common disease



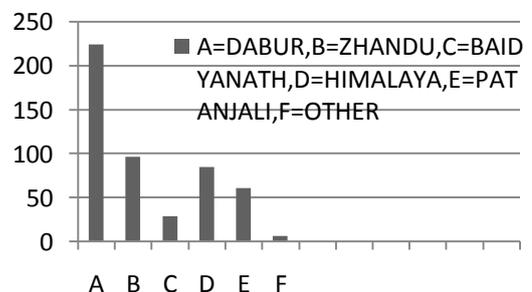
59.6%, n=298 Advertisements of Ayurvedic Products/medicines has a possible impact on Consumers (37.2%, n=186 of Consumer consumes Ayurvedic medicine along with

allopathic, homeopathic medicine for treating common disease. However the remaining consumers had refused to take Ayurvedic medicine along with allopathic, homeopathic medicine because the consumers of Joginder Nagar said that they don't believe in the double treatment, they either want to take Allopathic medicine or Ayurvedic medicine only.

72.6%, n=363 of Consumers are using herbal cosmetic products. This indicates that the herbal cosmetics are in great demand. Indian herbs and its significance are popular worldwide. Herbal Cosmetics have growing demand in the world market and is an inestimable gift of nature. There are a wide range of Herbal cosmetic products available in the market. Apart from traditionally documented applications, some modern trials have also constituted the utility of Indian herbs in personal care products. [1]

Many of the consumers have rigid mind set of particular brand like Dabur (44.8%, n=224), (19.2%, n=96), Himalaya (17.2%, n=84), Patanjali 12%, n=60). Dabur comes out to be the most favorite brand among consumers in Joginder Nagar region (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Favorite Ayurvedic brand



78.4%, n=382 of Consumers are using some Ayurvedic health/food supplements or Rejuvenating Ayurvedic medicines. Rejuvenation therapy involves tonic

herbs/drugs such as *Asparagus racemosus*, *Withania somnifera*, *Ocimum sanctum* to nourish all the tissues, promote the strength, enhance ojas and strengthen the immunity. It also involves eating foods like nuts, ghee and dairy products. In Ayurveda, Rasayana (tonics) are the sweet flavored tonic which increases the quantity and quality of the tissues as it is anabolic. The herbs/drugs that boost immunity are full of immune-enhancing saponins and polysaccharides.^[1]

73.6%, n=368 consumers agrees with the reliability of Ayurvedic Medicines. There are some advantages of natural medicine over modern medicine as complementary therapy, is easily available as home remedies. Natural therapy is comparatively cheaper than modern remedies and treatments.

Natural remedy generally does not produce any reaction unless intake of such medicine (the dosage) is not followed as per advice 96.2%, n=481 of consumers do not feel any side effect on their health. Complementary treatment or natural remedy is less likely to affect other bodily systems and hence is relatively safe. Natural remedies, being general daily health supplements, not only help in curing the primary ailment but also soothe other body systems. Holistic remedies help in rejuvenating and revitalizing the human health. Rather than working specifically on signs and symptoms, natural herbal remedies treat the root-cause. Thus, helps in terminating health ailment permanently.

CONCLUSION

After an analysis of response received it has been concluded that the people of Joginder Nagar are more interested in the Ayurvedic OTC products as compared to the product/medicine recommended by Physicians. Hence, scientific knowledge of the Ayurvedic/herbal drugs has to be transmitted out in a systematic manner to compete the international market and provide consumer satisfaction. The people of Joginder Nagar had not responded as per our estimation and hence the results are little bit deviated from exact situation prevailing in India for Ayurveda.

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