

# **Healthcare optimization, medication management and preparedness in Retail Pharmacy industry during the COVID-19 pandemic in India**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*BODY:* Corona Virus (COVID-19) pandemic is a health crisis which has almost impacted every industry, causing steep inroads into the global economy and Pharmaceutical industry is no exception. The Retail pharmacist are the most approachable and immediate healthcare aid to the general public. Pharmacists can implement guidance and best practice in response to the rapidly changing COVID-19 pandemic to ensure patient and staff safety, as well as the approaches pharmacy teams across the country. Social distancing and lockdown measures taken by the Indian government, the retail pharmacy industry has been greatly affected leading to disruption in the supply chain of medicines and other precautionary equipment. Medication management, necessary safety equipment and preparedness for handling drug shortages are the focus points for retail pharmacy industry in these times of the pandemic. As the retail pharmacy comes under essential services and is operating continuously during lockdown period, there is a need to highlight and gauge upon the level of preparedness and preventive measures undertaken by pharmacists in India during this medical emergency.

*AIM:* The aim of this research is to analyse the retail pharmacy administration in India towards essential medication, to check adherence to key preventative measures and activities performed in terms of patient counselling for self-management and safe dispensing of medicines in COVID-19 & lockdown period and the barriers faced/concerns towards these measures.

*METHODOLOGY:* This study is based on methods of quantitative analysis from the retail pharmacies in India. The survey questionnaire was drafted on Google forms and was sent to various retail pharmacy outlets across the country. The data pertains to the storage and consumption pattern of various medications, concerns over day to day activities in the pharmacy and preventive measures implemented by pharmacists towards COVID-19 preparedness.

**RESULT:** The questionnaire was addressed by 167 pharmacists across various regions of the country by different types of pharmacy: community pharmacy (66.5%), retail pharmacy section in a private (14.4%) and public hospital (11.4%) and clinical pharmacy (7.8%). The statements developed for the study are closely related and a good Cronbach's alpha value of 0.881 was achieved. One-way ANOVA testing determined that out of 12 statements on preparedness of pharmacy, 9 statements showed a significant difference with respect to the type of pharmacy implementing the preventive measures.

**KEYWORDS:** *Coronavirus; Indian Retail Pharmacy; Awareness and preventive measures; medication management; COVID-19 preparedness; Healthcare optimization.*