Shortfalls in both have differing economic consequences. The frequency distribution of drug intake is remarkably similar across disparate diseases and drugs, though poor methods and terminology have led many to believe otherwise. METHODS: There was similarity in 275 patients electronically monitored for 1–12 months, receiving pharmacotherapy for glaucoma, epilepsy, or ankylosing spondylitis. We transformed these data into a frequency distribution of time-to-consume a 60-day supply of drug, which ranged from 60–422 days, with a median of 71 and a mean of 78 days, i.e., a mean of 4.7 refills/year instead of the prescribed 6—a 22% shortfall in refills and revenues. RESULTS: We projected the impact of variable persistence using a model expressing patients’ movements between: treated, never treated, formerly treated, dead or otherwise untreated. We used published data on statin persistence to analyze various scenarios. With fixed monthly recruitment of patients into treatment, the divergence in revenues from the “perfect persistence” scenario is projected to result at the 15 year point in an ~80% shortfall in annual revenues. CONCLUSIONS: Published data may underestimate generally prevailing persistence, which would lessen the shortfall in revenues, but the impact on profits appears to be strikingly high. Methods that efficiently extend persistence are needed for the benefit of all parties.

HEALTHCARE POLICY—Consumer Role in Healthcare Studies

FEASIBILITY OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMS VIA AN EMPLOYER-BASED INTRANET SITE

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OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the feasibility of implementing a health and wellness program via a corporate intranet site. METHODS: A health and wellness program, addressing the impact of allergy symptoms and treatment on employees, was developed by a national employer and a pharmaceutical company. Employees at three locations (in the West, Southeast and Southwest) were invited to participate via their corporate intranet in a program that included links to web-based health education and an anonymous allergy survey. Respondents, who were self-identified allergy sufferers, provided information that included allergy symptom and treatment experience, knowledge of allergy triggers, quality of life impact, and lost work hours. RESULTS: An email containing program background and links to the survey and web-based education was sent to 22,000 employees, 50% of whom have direct access to the company intranet. Assuming average allergy prevalence of 20%, 400 employees completed the survey, representing an 18% response rate. This response rate is similar to that achieved via a 1-time mail administration. Consistent with data obtained through random samples, employees were more likely to suffer from seasonal allergies (65.8%), feel that their allergies were only under “fairly good control” (49.5%), and experience work loss (12.8 mean hours/per month) due to full or partial missed days or reduced effectiveness at work. In addition to willingness to answer questions about allergy symptomatology, knowledge, work attendance and performance, 80% of responders also answered lifestyle/health risk questions pertaining to issues such as nutrition, exercise and cigarette and alcohol consumption. CONCLUSIONS: This project demonstrates that communication of a health and wellness program to employees via corporate intranet can generate interest and significant involvement at levels equal to or greater than other approaches to work-site health education.

IMPACT OF RISK DISCLOSURES IN DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER ADVERTISING ON ELDERLY CONSUMERS’ BEHAVIORAL INTENT

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OBJECTIVE: The new FDA guidelines on direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising of prescription drugs require the sponsor to present balanced risk-benefit information. However, data suggests frequent lack of compliance with these guidelines. Misinformation to consumers can have serious implications on health and safety, especially in the elderly population who are more likely to respond to promotion. The objective of this study is to explore the impact of variations in risk disclosures through DTC print advertisements on elderly consumer behavior. METHOD: A 2 × 2 between-subjects factorial design was implemented, where the risk statements in the advertisements varied in number (two vs. four) and specificity (specific vs. general). A convenience sample of 200 elderly (60 years) male and female participants was recruited from Central Ohio. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four treatment groups and were asked to read a print advertisement for a fictitious anti-arthritic drug. Afterwards, each participant completed a questionnaire. The dependent variables were: attitude toward the advertised drug, intentions to seek additional information, intentions to seek advice from healthcare professionals, and to adopt the advertised drug. A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to evaluate the impact of the two independent variables (number and specificity of risk statements) on the dependent variables. RESULTS: Participants exposed to specific risk statements are less likely to look for additional information (p < 0.01) and adopt the advertised drug (p < 0.01). Additionally, they hold less favorable attitudes toward the advertised drug (p < 0.01) as compared to those presented with general risk statements. The number of risk statements presented affected neither attitude toward the advertised drug nor behavioral intentions. CONCLUSION: Specificity of risk information presented in the print drug advertisements is a key determinant of elderly consumer attitudes and