

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON COMMUNITY PHARMACIES

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**Abstract** - Pharmacies are a significant public health hazard on a global scale. Worldwide demand for pharmaceutical services and goods increased along with the severity of COVID. Additionally, telemedicine has grown. Small-scale drugstores and retail pharmacy suppliers thus found themselves in difficult situations. This project intends to evaluate Covid's overall effect on neighbourhood pharmacy and identify all the variables influencing neighbourhood pharmacies.

**Key Words:** Community pharmacies, Pandemic outbreak, Covid-19

## 1.INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of covid-19 has affected more than million lives all over the world. The world health organization has declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic as it unexpectedly spreads all over the world in a massive way. Nearly every sector and their business has been brought down economically. Government has provided rules and regulations to protect the people from the covid infections. They included all the preventive measures including safety, hygiene by wearing masks, gloves, and using sanitary products. Over a decade, the Covid has impacted a great demand on healthcare systems. The situation of covid has grown up as a challenge to the hospital and healthcare center. Increasing cases of covid resulted in the increasing demand for strategies planning including bed allotment, emergency procedures etc., As of now, everything even the medical consultation of covid has been brought online through video conferencing pharmaceutical services is the other most impacted sector in COVID. The crisis of pharmacies has been seen in different perspectives. These include fluctuation in prices, approval delays, slowdown supply chain growth and there may be possible changes in the consumption and distribution.

Not only the bigger pharmaceutical sector, even the community pharmacies must be taken into consideration. The public is dependable on the retail community pharmacies. The pandemic

outbreak also has a great impact on those community pharmacies. The educational level of those working in these pharmacies vary from Pharmacy degree holders to diploma pharmacists. However, according to the pharmacy act, 1984 persons without any educational qualification were unable to register their names as pharmacists. Community pharmacies are called retail medical stores by the public which is considered to be easily accessible at times of disaster and pandemics. These pharmacies not only serve the public with drugs but also ensure to provide preventive measures by supplying recently established safety measures and hygiene control activities. The Covid-19 has caused a great impact even to the retail pharmacies. Many community pharmacies have become financially down and led to business closure due to many factors which have influenced the supply chain.

These issues lead to this research paper, with the objectives

- To evaluate the impact of the Covid-19 on community pharmacies
- To analyse the different factors which influences the community pharmacies
- To comeup with preventive measures for the situation

Using a survey methodology, we tend to analyze the factors responsible for the impact of covid on community pharmacies. The expected outcomes of this research is to come up with insights and values for better findings of the actual state of community pharmacies.

## 2.

### Review of Literature:

According to Dawit kumilachew yimenu<sup>1</sup>. Chilot Abiy Demeke<sup>2</sup>. Asmamaw Emagn Kasahun<sup>3</sup>. Ebrahim Abdela Siraj<sup>4</sup>. Adane Yehualaw Wendalem<sup>5</sup>. Zegaye Agmassie Bazezew<sup>6</sup>. Abebe Basazn Mekuria<sup>7</sup>. (2021), The study aimed at assessing the covid-19 impact on pharmaceutical care services. They have analyzed each and every factor of the community pharmacies including the patient flow, patient's personal hygiene measures, drug supply chain development and types of medicines highly consumed and in great surplus. Included account on shortage of pharmaceutical products and personal hygiene products. The role of community pharmacist in Covid is considered to be a dependent variable and socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants is meant to be an independent variable. Study findings include the shortage of products and fluctuation in prices leads to the greater impact on community pharmacies during Covid.

According to Ellen S Koster<sup>1</sup>. Daphne Philbert<sup>2</sup>. Marcel L Bouvy<sup>3</sup>. (2020), Most pharmacies service included hygiene procedures and logistics changes to minimize patient encounters. The article promotes the use of remote healthcare or telepharmacy during Covid in order to facilitate quick and easy supply of products and related information to the public and patients. Most participants were promoted to conduct medications reviews. The gap is analyzed between the pharmacies and the supply chain.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

#### Study design and setting:

A descriptive qualitative survey using a phenomenological approach was conducted among people in the pharma related services and small-scale retail community pharmacies. This study was conducted to analyze how the covid situation has influenced the community pharmacies in the Coimbatore region.

#### Population and sampling:

The **population size is 80** which includes all the retail pharmacy stores in the North-west region (Lawley Road, Vadavalli, Pudur, Thondamuthur) of coimbatore. Among all

those, a **sample of 67** was selected through the Convenience sampling method for this study.

#### Study variables:

The dependent variable is considered to be the impact of covid on community pharmacies and the independent variable includes demographic characteristics of the community pharmacists including their Age, Sex, Educational qualification, experience in the field and the Area where their pharmacy is located.

#### Data collection tools:

A questionnaire was prepared after analyzing the factors which influenced the community pharmacies during covid. This is done through Google forms by means of survey and circulated to the respective pharmacies through social media. The data is also collected through in person visits to the community pharmacies. The questionnaire has 18 questions which were split into two sections. The first section contains all the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The second section contains 12 questions which are used to analyze the factors which have impacted the community pharmacies during covid.

#### Data analysis:

The data collected were analyzed using simple percentage analysis. Each question was analyzed and tested for completeness of all the data required by the participants.

### RESULT AND INTERPRETATION:

All the data were collected by using google forms and analyzed.

### DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF THE STUDY

#### PARTICIPANTS:

Out of the total respondents, male respondents were 54% and female respondents consist of 46%. The maximum respondents age lies between 36-45 years which is 43.2%. The maximum number of respondents graduated which is in total 66%. Maximum number of study participants has >10years (52.2) of experience in the field of pharmacy. Most of the study participants have their pharmacy in urban areas.

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	36	54%
Female	31	46%
<b>AGE</b>		
18-25 years	15	22.4%
26-35 years	19	28.4%
36-45 years	29	43.2%
>45 years	04	6%
<b>EDUCATION</b>		
Diploma	23	34%
Graduate	44	66%
<b>EXPERIENCE</b>		
0-5 years	15	22.3%
5-10 years	17	25.3%
>10 years	35	52.2%
<b>LOCATION</b>		
Rural	30	45%
Urban	37	55%

**Table -1: Demographic characteristics of Participants**

Male respondents comprised 54% of the total respondents, while female respondents comprised up 46%. 43.2% of responders had an age range between 36 and 45 as their maximum. The highest percentage of respondents—66%—were graduates. The majority (52.2) of survey participants have more than 10 years of pharmacy-related experience. The majority of the study's participants have pharmacies in cities.

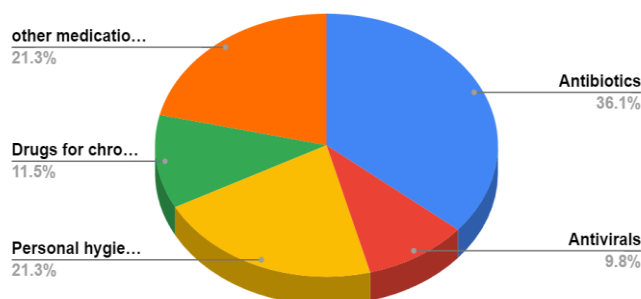
	YES	NO	MAY BE
Do you think covid 19 had brought a negative impact on the pharmaceutical care service?	31	28	8
Do you think the situation has decreased the patient flow to the pharmacy?	28	28	11
Do you encounter any shortage of pharmaceutical products because of the pandemic	47	20	0
Is there any change in the cost of the products	49	18	0
Is there any problem in purchasing wholesale products	36	31	0
Do you follow any protective measures to avoid people from products making fraudulent covid claims?	51	16	0

Do you feel any fluctuation in customer satisfaction	38	29	0
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**Table -1: Impact of Covid-19 on community pharmacies**

The majority of respondents mentioned that covid-19 had an adverse effect on their pharmacy. There may be changes in the price of the products, according to 73.1% of the respondents. 54% of respondents admitted that they have difficulty purchasing wholesale goods. The way of attending medication has been specified by 60.7% of the responders as both in-person and by mobile receipts. 78.7% of the observed contributors claimed to have safeguards in place to protect people from false COVID-19 claims. Overall, 52.5% of the pharmacists who answered to the survey stated that the situation with COVID-19 has a significant negative impact.

**Types of pharma products which were in shortage of supply during Covid**



**Fig -1: Type of pharma products and medications which were in shortage during the outbreak of covid-19**

21.3% of the study participants said there was a lack of personal hygiene items and other prescriptions, whereas the majority of participants reported there was a lack of antibiotics during COVID-19

#### Recommendations for this study:

If the Covid situation worsens, pharmacies should implement procedures for monitoring the availability of stock for emergency scenarios. It is preferable to use telemedicine services, which make it simple to reach a greater number of patients, in order to avoid intimate contact. Since community pharmacies are an accessible source for medications and personal care items, they should implement certain preventive steps to stop the spread of the illness. Healthcare will

become more computerised in the future. To meet all of the needs of the clients, digital marketing initiatives and situational awareness are necessary.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, community pharmacies have been shown to have a negative effect on healthcare services. Additionally, it was discovered that there was a lack of several supplies, and they also claimed to have suffered a substantial loss during the COVID-19

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