

Risks and Benefits of Online Pharmacy

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DESCRIPTION

Online pharmacies are businesses which sell the medicines including those which require as per the prescription, on the Internet.

Online trades of drugs have grown rapidly, mostly driven by the lower price point of online pharmacies. It cannot be doubted, however, that a high degree of the integrity is required to maintain the health standards and to fulfill the ethical responsibility to the provide optimal care for patients.

Legally, online pharmacies must be licensed in any of the region, where consumers may do purchase, although the exact guidelines vary according to the country or state of practice. Additionally, the physical properties of online pharmacies marketing to some countries, such as the United States, must be based in the country to which the sales takes place.

Risks and benefits

There is no doubt that the online pharmacies can be of great benefit for the patients in some instances. This is particularly for the individuals who live in rural or remote areas, or for those who may have difficulty in gaining the access to a traditional community pharmacy. Online pharmacies can also increase the convenience of purchase of medicines, and have an economic benefit for many of the consumers, regardless of location.

Sometimes labeling may be misleading or may inappropriate. Additionally, the pharmacist-patient interaction is usually less focused or it may non-existent in an online environment, which could possibly result in misinformed patients and increased likelihood of the medication errors. A study has even shown a higher risk of the adverse effects when prescription of painkillers was purchased without prescription online, as compared to the traditional routes of purchase *via* prescription at a physician's office. This phenomenon has been assumed to be the effect of the unsupervised dosages, the interactions with the other medications and the inappropriate conditions of use of these drugs.

However, online drugstores are not without their own risks. Of particular concern is the high incidence of the counterfeit or sub-optimal quality pharmaceutical goods sold online, when compared to the community pharmacy. In most of the cases, patients are unable to identify differences in the appearance of the drugs until they feel the effects after the administration of the dose Packaging.

The provision of the advice to the patients about health and the safe dosage, administration, side-effects and interactions of the medications they ask for, whether over-the-counter or, is one of the central roles of the pharmacist. It is important that this is not compromised with the putting into practice of the online pharmacy business model.

The way in which the advice is offered can vary between diverse pharmacies. Although the most online pharmacies include a Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) pamphlet, it is feared that in practice many patients may not take the time to understand the important information in it. Thus a Consumer Medicine Information may suffice in some cases, but the online pharmacies may need to make the additional contact by phone, particularly for the complicated cases that are more likely to be associated with the potential issues.

Customer Satisfaction is Similar to any other business, the success of an online pharmacy joins the satisfaction of the patients who make use of their services, because this only can ensure the ongoing viability of the business.

It is only possible for these areas to be handled optimally by an online pharmacy, if appropriate care is taken to address the basic needs of the patients to the same degree, and to maintain the quality of the care, that has traditionally been offered by the community pharmacists. When the customers are satisfied with the service, they will be more likely to seek the further care.

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