

Attitudes towards OTC Pharmaceuticals (results from empirical research in the Republic of Serbia)

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The pharmaceutical market is one of the most prominent, but also the most controversial markets in the world. The industry itself can be considered as a truly global discovery process (clinical research, R&D activities, manufacturing, sales and marketing challenge, existence of national borders and legislations).

Marketing activities of pharmaceutical companies relate directly to specific consumer behaviour patterns choosing and using OTC pharmaceuticals (analgesics or painkillers being one of most widely used therapeutic categories of pharmaceutical products sold without prescription). Research was conducted on 330 respondents, at selling points – pharmacies, in the northern region of Vojvodina, Serbia, in August 2006. The instrument of research consisting of 25 questions gave insight in the following areas:

- Circumstances in OTC analgesics usage, most common usage, pain tolerance and habits in seeking appropriate help, attitudes towards packaging insert, frequency and quantity of usage
- Attitudes towards OTC analgesics, quality features, price, safety and side-effects, validity of marketing information, distribution channels
- Sources of information that influence product/brand choice, image and trustworthiness of producers, future of market

Since the Serbian pharmaceutical market lacks international sales monitoring of different pharmaceutical categories, numerous global companies very often use pharmaceutical market data on neighbouring Hungary to access dimensions of the Serbian market. Geographical proximity, similar climate conditions, demographical structure and eating habits bring these two nations close regarding morbidity statistics. Hence, this contributes to actuality and validity of the topic for the entire Central European region, and markets legging in development can benefit from understanding development patterns.

Keywords: OTC pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical industry, consumer behaviour, consumer attitudes, marketing research