# Selection of brand names for a drug by Indian pharmaceutical companies

Brand names are important for building brand equity. A brand's power derived from the goodwill and name recognition that it has earned over time, which translates into higher sales volume and higher profit margins against competing brands is called brand equity[1].

Selection of good brand name would result in increase of value for a product. A brand is: '… a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'[2].

The concept of pharmaceutical branding is different from that of consumer's goods. One of the important aspects of branding for pharmaceutical companies is choosing an ideal name for a drug. The marketing department of pharmaceutical companies strives to create a brand name that customers (doctors) find comfortable, fast-acting and miraculous. Above all, they want it to be easy to remember and pronounce. In pharmaceutical industry, a drug is given a unique trade or brand name, which is decided on many factors. Drugs have three or more names including chemical name, brand or trade name, and generic or common name. The chemical name is assigned according to rules of nomenclature of chemical compounds. The brand name is always capitalized and is selected by the manufacturer. The generic name refers to a common established name irrespective of its manufacturer. In most cases, a drug bearing a generic name is equivalent to the same drug with a brand name[3]. However, adding to this there are other criteria based on which pharmaceutical companies name their drugs.

The present study was aimed to identify various strategies (selection criteria) used by pharmaceutical companies to name their drug. Factors influencing each brand name and preferences of pharmaceutical companies for deciding the brand names were studied. The needed information was collected through secondary sources. Recent issue of commonly used *RefRx* (July–October 2015) was referred for the study. These issues list various medical formulations and brands available in the Indian pharmaceutical market. The listed medical formulations are for information purpose and not as medical guidance. Drugs were classified on the basis of their pharmacological action. Each brand name was scrutinized and categorized based on the factors influencing that particular name. The categories chosen were as follows:

1. Action based: Pharmaceutical companies name their drug on the basis of pharmacological properties like mode of action and their pharmacological action or activity[4].

2. Indication based: An 'indication' for a drug refers to the use of that drug for treating a particular disease[5].

3. Property based: Based on physical and pharmacokinetic properties of drugs, companies name their drug.

4. Company based: In this category usually name is given to drug by the company that first manufactures it[6,7].

5. Constituent based: Companies name their drug based on active ingredient or constituent present in a pharmaceutical drug that is biologically active.

6. Constituent cum company based: The drug names are based on constituents present in pharmaceutical drug in combination with company name. Some other methods are action cum constituent based, company cum property, indication cum company and elegant names.

The number of drugs in each category was represented in the form of a table. A total of 1225 drug brand names was analysed for the study.

Table 1 shows the total number of brand names screened from each therapeutic category. Table 2 shows brand name selection criteria adapted by pharmaceutical companies.

From Table 2, it was noted that '460 brand names resemble' based on active constituents of the drugs. Active ingredients in a pharmaceutical drug is biologically active. These ingredients are the chemically active substance which is meant to produce the desired effect in the body. Majority of the companies give brand name to their drug based on active constituents present in the drug. This naming strategy help the physicians to recall the brand name of the drug. Physicians are well versed with generic drug name, so it becomes easy to recall brand name of a drug, if it resembles with active ingredient in a pharmaceutical drug. About 154 brand names were based on active constituents and company name. In this type of brand naming

**Table 1.** Number of brand names screened from each therapeutic category

| Therapeutic category | Number of screened brands |
| --- | --- |
| Gastrointestinal system | 80 |
| Endocrine/steroid hormones | 147 |
| Hepatobiliary system | 23 |
| Genito-urinary system | 105 |
| Reproductive system | 76 |
| Immunology and allergy | 73 |
| Antineoplastic agent | 73 |
| Vitamins | 47 |
| Antidotes | 13 |
| Nervous system | 105 |
| Ear, nose and throat | 18 |
| Ocular | 53 |
| Cardiovascular system | 80 |
| Hematological system | 27 |
| Respiratory system | 48 |
| Musculoskeletal disorders and pains | 63 |
| Anti-infective | 133 |
| Skin | 34 |
| Anesthetics | 27 |
| Total | 1225 |

**Table 2.** Brand name selection criteria adapted by pharmaceutical companies

| Pharmacological category | Indication | Action | Property | Company | Active constituents | Constituents + company | Action + constituents | Company + property | Indication + company | Others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gastrointestinal system | 9 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 10 | | 21 |
| Endocrine-e hormones | 8 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 70 | 23 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 31 |
| Hepatobiliary | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Genito-urinary system | 7 | 13 | 4 | 9 | 33 | 14 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 15 |
| Reproductive system | 0 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 22 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 40 |
| Immunology and allergy | 29 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 16 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 11 |
| Antineoplastic agents | – | – | – | – | 31 | 27 | – | – | – | 15 |
| Vitamins | 2 | – | – | – | 29 | 6 | – | – | – | 10 |
| Antidotes | | | | | 6 | 1 | 1 | | | 5 |
| Nervous system | 10 | 1 | 0 | 37 | 17 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 22 |
| ENT | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| Ocular | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 24 |
| CVS | 4 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 33 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 35 |
| Hematological system | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Respiratory system | 9 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 16 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Musculo-skeletal disorders | 3 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 17 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 27 |
| Anti-infective | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 89 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 17 |
| Skin | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Anesthetics | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |

strategy companies name their drug taking into consideration active constituents and company name. This type of naming helps usually for renowned pharmaceutical companies. Physicians usually recall in their mind drug name and established reputed company name. The next type of brand naming strategy is based on indication of the drug. Ninety one brand names were based on indication of the drug. In this type of naming strategy, drug name is given based on particular disease, where the drug is supposed to cure the disease. Another naming strategy is based on action of the drugs. About 37 brands were named based on the action of drugs. Actions of drugs are the biochemical physiological mechanisms by which the chemical produces a response in living organisms. Other category includes constituent cum category cum company name, indication cum constituent and some other stylish names. Overall a majority of brand names are based on active constituents followed by combination of company name and active constituents.

Ideal brand names in the pharmaceutical industry help in increasing differentiation and create a unique image in the minds of physicians. Brand names should be clear and consistent. Pharmaceutical companies should try to create a brand for their drug which will help to deliver long lasting relationship with the healthcare professional. Hence, naming a drug is part of branding which plays a great role in the pharmaceutical industry.

1. Brand Equity; Available from: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-equity.html#ixzz48n88ECD8 (accessed on 12 February 2016).
2. Kotler, P., In *Marketing Management*, Prentice Hall of India, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 404–418.
3. Introduction to drug action; available from: http://chemistry.elmhurst.edu/vchembook/650drugs.html (accessed on 20 May 2016).
4. Pharmaceutical drug; available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharmaceutical_drug (accessed on 20 April 2016).
5. Indications for drugs (uses), approved versus non-approved; available from: http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=20732 (accessed on 2 March 2016).
6. Drug profile; available from: https://wikis.engrade.com/pharmalessons/profile (accessed on 5 April 2016).
7. Overview of generic drugs and drug naming, available from: http://www.msdmanuals.com/home/drugs/brand-name-and-generic-drugs/overview-of-generic-drugs-and-drug-naming. (accessed on 2 May 2016).

S. Tanya
K. M. Arbind
Virendra S. Ligade*

*Department of Pharmacy Management,
Manipal College of Pharmaceutical
Sciences,
Manipal University,
Manipal 576 104, India*
*e-mail: virendra123sl@gmail.com

# Detecting disguised plagiarism

The topic of plagiarism has been receiving its due attention in the pages of *Current Science* from time to time, the most recent one being the editorial, 'Ethics and Indian Science' that touches the issue of plagiarism among other things[1]. That plagiarism is a menace is well recognized and institutions such as the UGC have issued directives to the State and Central universities to use anti-plagiarism software to curb the pervasive problem[2]. The research institutions in India under various umbrella organizations are also increasingly employing plagiarism checking software to stave off potential