

CU2.

DRUG ADVERTISEMENTS IN TWO MEDICAL JOURNALS- A COMPARATIVE STUDY

L.S.BADURALIYA

4th year Medical Student, Faculty of Medicine, University of Peradeniya

Studies have shown unethical marketing practices of the pharmaceutical industry in developing countries. This study was undertaken to compare the quality of information of drug advertisements of two journals: from a developing and a developed country.

The advertisements of all the issues of the Ceylon Medical Journal (Sri Lanka), and The Practitioner (UK) of 1996 were screened. These were studied for predetermined parameters based on WHO guide lines for drug advertising. Accuracy of information was assessed as per a standard reference book.. Taking both into consideration a marking scheme was designed. Misleading information were given negative marks. The pictures were analysed by 4 clinicians using a questionnaire.

The total advertisements screened were 86. The percentage of pages occupied by advertisements in CMJ was 31% whilst in The Practitioner 53%. Mean marks scored by the CMJ was 33.78% whilst The Practitioner scored 63.72%. Approximately 60% of the advertisements of CMJ scored < than 40% and had the following deficiencies: absent generic name, indication, precautions, dosage regimen, contraindications and adverse effects for use of drugs. 88% of the advertisements of The Practitioner scored > than 40%. 27.9% of advertisements of CMJ and 2.3% in The Practitioner carried misleading information. The picture of the advertisements in both journals were not symbolic but were attractive.

The absences of scientific information and the presence of misleading information were apparent in the advertisements of the CMJ. This may lead to irrational practices of prescribing especially in the peripheral hospitals where there is a lacunae of scientific information. Further, the editors should scrutinise the advertisements for the basic requirements. The guidelines of WHO, IFPMA should be strengthened.