**Pharmaceutical advertisement and citation practice in the leading Therapeutic Indexes in Bangladesh**

**Reviewer 1:**

General

* 1) The issue of medical advertisements is important in medical ethics as there it may greatly influence prescribing patterns of physicians and hence impact treatment and safety .  
    
  2) The study is in Bangladesh, but the theme is applicable to other countries.   
    
  3) It can influence practice and policy, but the dangers of advertisements and how it affects prescribing need to be studied in depth and presented well
* 4) The information from the study is new, but the theme is not new since there are other studies in countries. The discussion is generally written well and conclusion is appropriate  
  .

5) It is mentioned in the key message point 3 that there is no scientific fact in the advertisements. This is an over generalization since later on in the introduction its mentioned that the source of the texts in these ads are from journals etc.

6). The link between advertisements, the lack of reference, and how that influences prescribing is not clear. It would have been important to see whether there is any inaccurate data in the advertisements which may impact the safety of the patient. However this part is lacking in the study.

7). On the whole, the article can be shortened and the same message can still be achieved

Specific comments:

a). Abstract:

* What is therapeutix index. This may not be clear to the reader (except those in

pharmacy/pharmacological fields and some physicians)

* What is the law regarding whether references should be included in the advertisement?
* What does the Bangladesh Drug Control Office policy say on that?
* It would have been good to look at the accuracy of these advertisements vis a vis the

original monograph in order to prove the danger of the advertisement and also to prove your point that reference is needed.

b) Introduction:

* What is a portfolio?
* “Therefore, it yields millions of dollars of additional sales and profits to the advertisers.” – is this an assumption or fact? If it is a fact, then it needs a reference
* There is a general basis for the study, but the introduction does not clearly mention what is the context within Bangladesh and the link to the objectives of the study.

c) Objective – there are many objectives and it is unclear which are the priority. It is also not

clear what is the reason why both the therapeutic indexes are compared. Is it because one is a

gold standard?

d) Material and methods:

* Why was only one issue of the therapeutic index sampled? How was that particular issue chosen?
* There is no need to elaborate on all the drugs which come under ATC groups. This is not really relevant to the study and is generally known. However if absolutely necessary, a table can used which will make it easier to follow.
* Why were advertisements on ayurvedic and herbal medicines excluded? They also provide revenue as suggested for allopathic medicines earlier.

e) Results – The text is duplicated from the tables. This is not needed. Instead, only the most

important highlights should be mentioned. Even though the methods mentioned statistical

analysis through levels of significance, this is not mentioned in the tables.

f) Discussion: It would be important to put the results in the context of law in Bangladesh or any

policies from the drug control dept. There needs to be some element of discussion on how

influential these indexes are in the presence of such information on the internet and other

resources. In “Limitations”, it is mentioned that a non-random sampling was done. What

prevented a random sampling?

g) Acknowledgements – It is not clear who is being referred to by them as ‘he’.

**Comments of Reviewer 2:**

1. This paper has a very detailed analysis relevant to pharmaceutical practice.

2. The study however, does not touch on the ethical implications of pharmaceutical advertising. It needs to have an ethics focus to be suitable for publication in *IJME.*

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