

# Consumer Perceptions Towards Medicines Types: Brand Medicines Versus Generic Medicines.

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## Abstract-

Generic medicines are an important and recognised front of competition to Brand medicines. It is also an important innovation for cost reduction in pharmaceutical market, which leads to possible savings for patients.

In this context, it is important to understand the consumer behaviour associated with both medicine types (Generics and Brand), and it is also relevant to find out what is the attitude of people towards those, what can influence consumers attitudes and also if this attitude influences behavioural intension and the future purchase, due to the engagement created.

Besides, it is interesting to study if there are different answers according to different ages and different proximity with the new technologies (internet, websites and social networks).

For the research purpose it was applied as an online survey to a non-representative random sample in the age group of 18-70 years, who buy medicines and responses to valid questionnaire were collected where we have got 298 responses from patients each consuming either generic or branded drugs.

From the responses, it was possible to conclude that the number of people that buy Generics and Brand Medicines does not differ much within the variety of therapeutic groups. It also proves that the Generic engagement is now as big as the engagement with Brand Medicines.

**KEYWORDS:** Brand medicines, Generic medicines.

## INTRODUCTION

Brand Medicines is a term to define those drugs that can only be produced and sold by the company that holds the patent for the drugs.<sup>[1]</sup> On the other hand, Generic Medicines can be defined as replicas of brand name drugs with the same quantities of active ingredients, effects, way of administration, risks and safety and as strength as the original medicine; which mean that the pharmacological effects are the same as those from brand name medicines.<sup>[2]</sup>

This theme is relevant, as Generics Market has been growing in the last few years, due to a variety of measures, as promotional campaigns, introduced by the health Ministry.<sup>[3]</sup> Those campaigns have the aim of creating within the patients the confidence so that they start consuming those medicines, that have good quality and lower prices, when compared to brand medicines.<sup>[4,5]</sup>

India has been making huge efforts in order to improve the access to medicines, promoting more consistent health measures where the main objective is to reach as many patients as possible.

Pharmaceutical market is extremely special, with a lot of complexity and variety of intervenient: pharmaceutical companies, distributors, pharmacies, doctors, health technicians, patients, public and private health entities and insurance companies.

## SAFETY & QUALITY IN GENERICS

Due to the fact that generic medicines are cheaper than the branded, many patients are attracted by this powerful argument.<sup>[2]</sup> Many people are still concerned about why these medicines are less expensive, wondering if the quality and effectiveness is compromised when using generics.<sup>[6,7]</sup> Nevertheless, the answer is simple, these medicines are less expensive due to the fact that manufacturers have no expenses in the development, research, marketing and promotion, because these issues have already been done by the company that possesses the patent.<sup>[8]</sup>

When the medicine's patent protection ends, the formulation information becomes a matter of public knowledge, and by this time other pharmaceutical companies are allowed to manufacture the medicine as well. In the end the only investment necessary for generic manufactures are the costs of setting up a production line.<sup>[9]</sup>

## ADVANTAGES

1. Generic medicines represent an advantage not only for the final consumer but also for the National Health Service and country economy.<sup>[10]</sup>
2. Generic medicines are those, whose active substances have been in the market for several years, provide greater assurance of effectiveness and allow a better understanding of its safety profile.
3. Another advantage of the generics is that in general they are 20 or 35% cheaper than the reference medicine whose pharmaceutical form is the same and which have the same pharmacology.<sup>[11]</sup>

## POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In order to get information about the characteristics or the parameters of the individuals in the study, the empirical research implies data collection in form of observations, in this way population can be defined as "a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristic defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher."<sup>[12]</sup>

The target population in this survey based study are adults with age more than 18 years and less than 80 years. With the objective that the selection of enquiries be the as random possible, there was no filtering criteria except the age more than 18.

Due to time and resources constraints, a non-probabilistic sampling process was chosen. The sample obtained is a non-representative one, which means that it is not possible to extrapolate the findings obtained in the sample to the universe with confidence, due to the fact that it is not guarantee that this sample will be representative of the population.

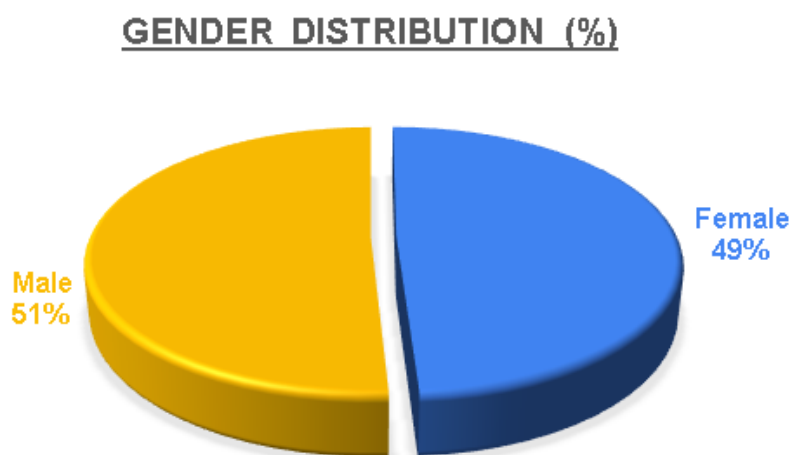
## RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This section aims at presenting the results of the survey done, regarding the analysis of the results in a critical and future based vision, as well as the validation of the research. It is divided in:

- Socio-demographic characterization of the sample
- Frequency of medicines purchase
- Perception about types of medicines and its quality
- Visit to generic medical stores
- Influencers' Role
- Generic Medicine instead of Brand Medicine
- Brand Medicine changed for a Generic Medicine (%)
- Opinion of consumer regarding pricing of types of medicines
- Future purchase intension

## 1. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SAMPLE

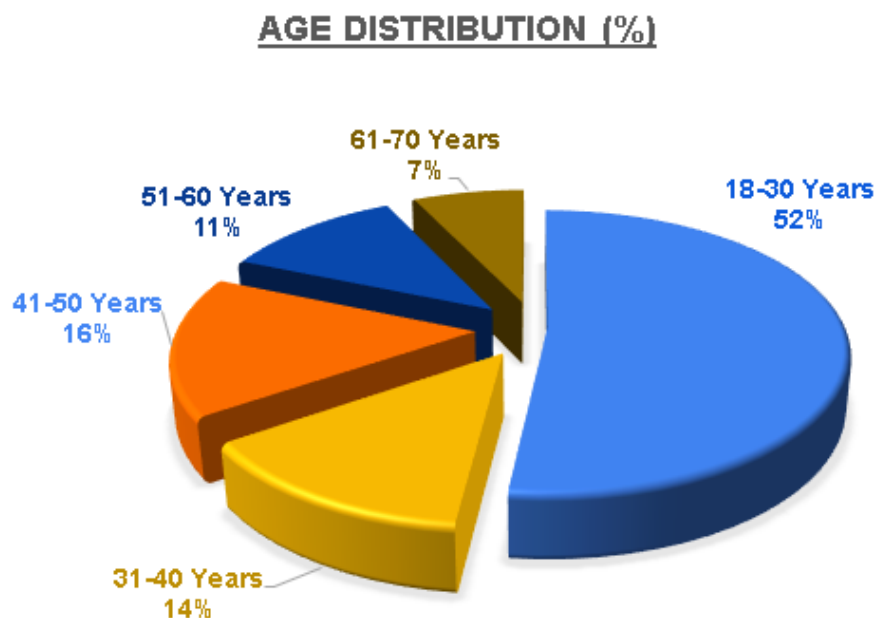
### a. Distribution of the sample by gender (%)



**Figure 1 :** Distribution of the sample by gender (%)

Regarding the socio-demographic factors it is important to analyse some distributions of the sample in order to better understand the rest of the analysis. In Figure 1, it is possible to see that in this sample there is a small but not significant majority of the male gender.

### b. Distribution of the sample by age (%)



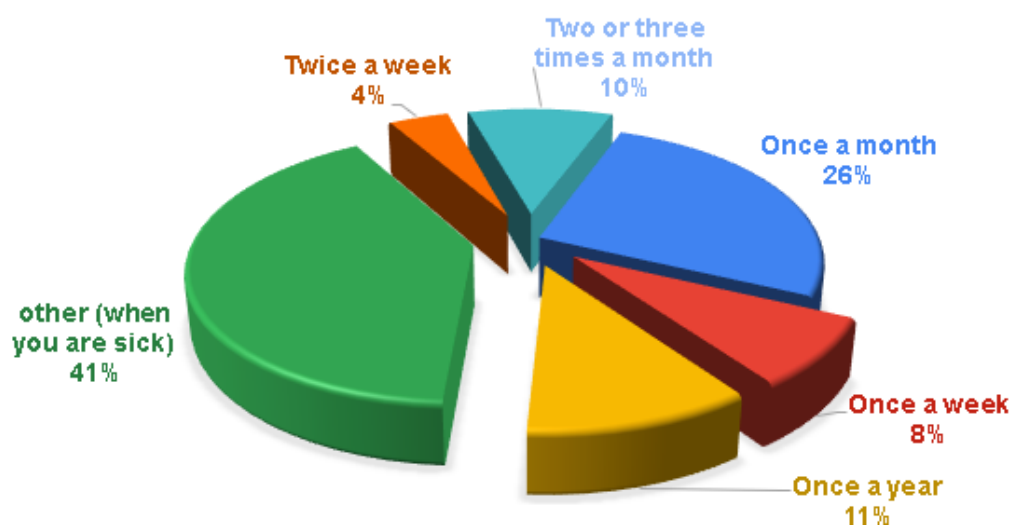
**Figure 2 :** Distribution of sample by age(%)

As can be seen from Figure 2, the majority of the sample population has age between 18 and 30 years, which can be explained by the non-probabilistic sample process that was used to collect information, through researcher's professional and social networks. This attests the non-representativeness when we compare these results with the ones of the Indian population between 18 to 70 years.

## 2. FREQUENCY OF MEDICINES PURCHASE

- Distribution of the sample by frequency of medicines purchase (%)

### FREQUENCY OF MEDICINES PURCHASE (%)



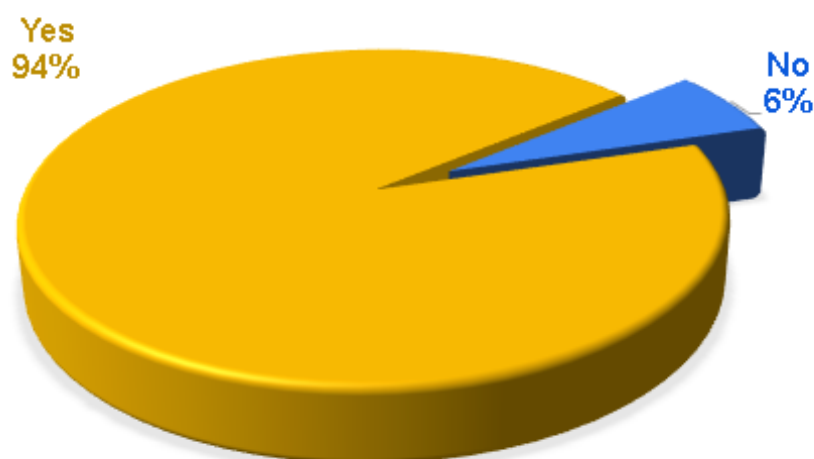
**Figure 3 :** Distribution of the sample by frequency of medicines purchased (%)

It is possible to observe in figure 3, the majority of the inquiries in this sample have a habit of purchase medicines once a month (26%), others affirm to buy medicines two or three times per month (10%), a small amount claim to buy medicines once or twice a week, both with 4%. There is still an important part of the sample that only buy medicines once a year and others that have another reason to buy as: only when they are sick, less than one time per month, few times a year, in a daily basis or even rarely.

## 3. PERCEPTION ABOUT TYPES OF MEDICINES AND ITS QUALITY

- Knowledge about the term “branded medicines” (%)

### **Perception about the term “branded medicines” (%)**



**Figure 4 :** Perception about the term “branded medicines” (%)

b. Knowledge about the term “generic medicine” (%)

**Perception about the term “generic medicine” (%)**

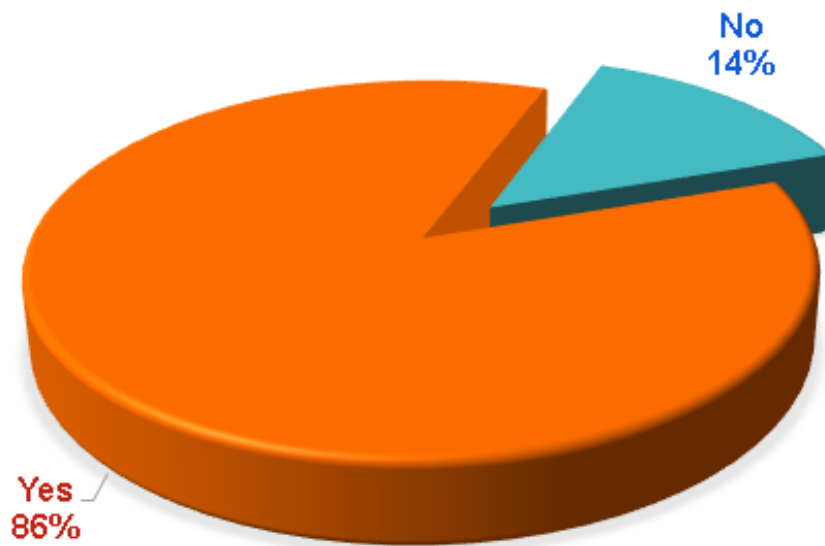


Figure 5 : Perception about the term “generic medicines” (%)

c. Perception about quality of medicine (%)

**Perception about quality of medicine (%)**

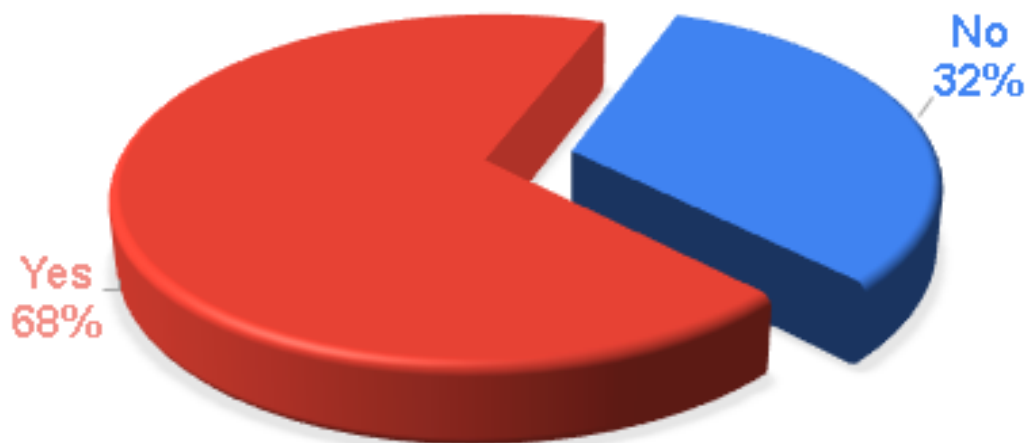


Figure 6 : Perception about quality of medicines (%)

4. VISIT TO GENERIC MEDICAL STORES(%)

**VISIT TO GENERIC MEDICAL (%)**



Figure 7: Visit to generic medical (%)

5. INFLUENCERS' ROLE

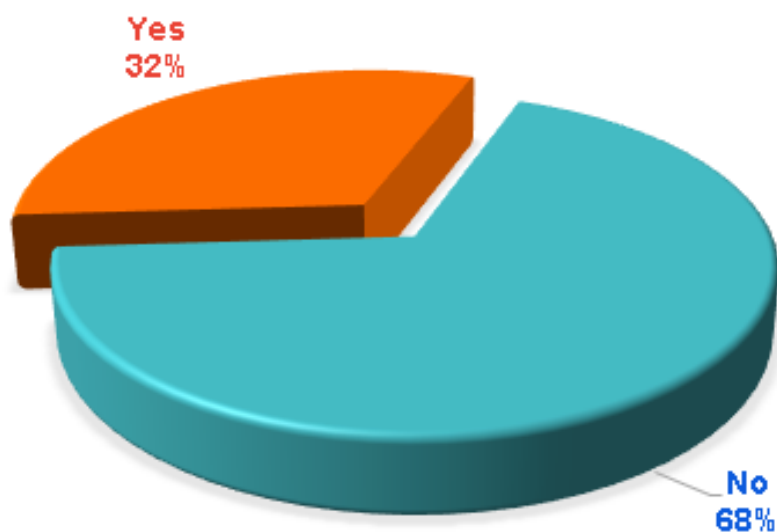
a. Generic Medicine advice by the Doctor (%)

**GENERIC MEDICINE ADVICE BY THE DOCTOR (%)**



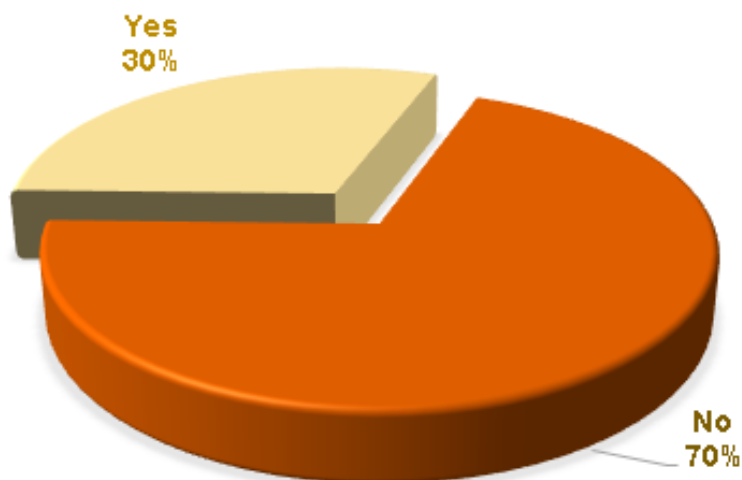
Figure 8 : Generic medicine advice by the doctor (%)

## b. Generic Medicine advice by Pharmacist (%)

**GENERIC MEDICINE ADVICE BY PHARMACY (%)****Figure 9** : Generic medicine advice by the Pharmacist (%)

In both figures 8 and 9, it is possible to observe that the majority of the inquiries affirm that they were advised by those entities to take a Generic. In the case of the doctor advice, 37% confirm that they were advised to take a Generic pill while 63% say that they were never advised to take a Generic Medicine. In the second case, 32% affirm that they were advised by a pharmacist to follow a treatment using a Generic Medicine, while 68% confirm that they were never advised to take a Generic Medicine in Pharmacy

## 6. Generic Medicine instead of Brand Medicine (%)

**GENERIC MEDICINE INSTEAD OF BRAND MEDICINE IN PHARMACY (%)****Figure 10** : Generic medicine instead of brand medicine (%)

7. Brand Medicine changed for a Generic Medicine (%)

**GENERIC MEDICINE CHANGED FOR A BRAND MEDICINE AT DOCTOR (%)**

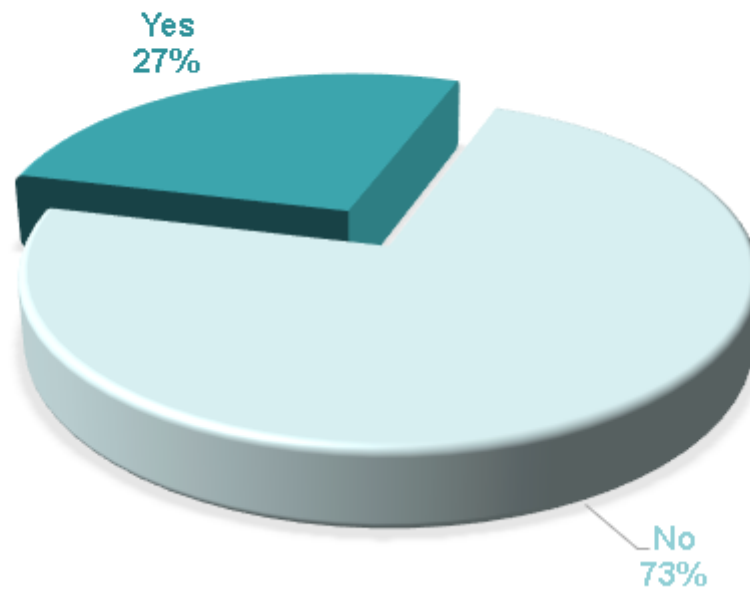


Figure 11 : Brand medicine changed for Generic medicine (%)

8. Opinion of consumer regarding pricing of types of medicine (%)

**PRICE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENERIC AND BRANDED MEDICINES**

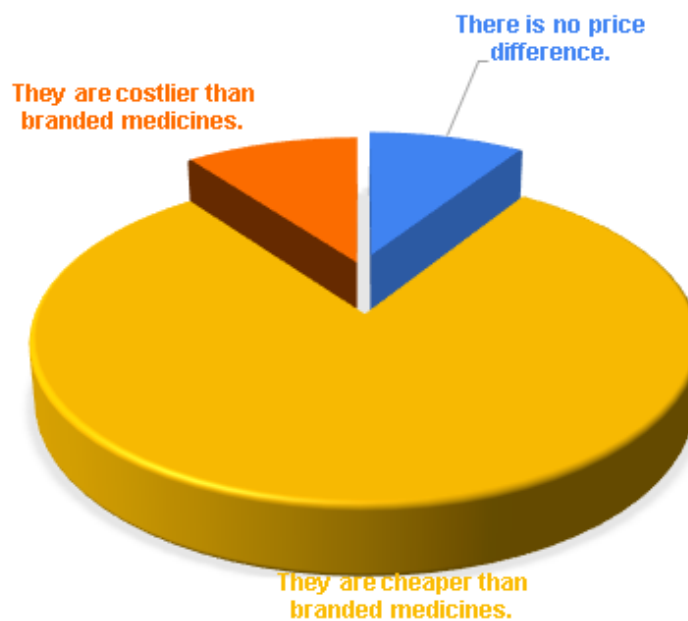


Figure 12 : Opinion of consumer regarding pricing of types of medicine (%)

### 9. Future purchase intension (%)

Acceptance of generics seems to be higher in consumers (81%) with higher levels of education while patients from lower socioeconomic demographic groups, therefore generally having lower levels of education, tend to possess greater mistrust of generics.

### FUTURE PURCHASE INTENSION

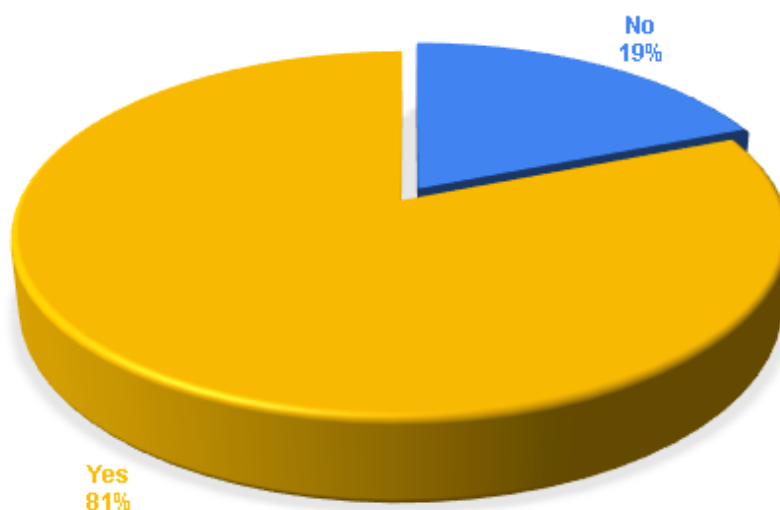


Figure 13 : Future Purchase intension (%)

### Conclusion-

Pharmaceutical market is a sector that is facing huge changes, due to the preoccupation with drug safety, intellectual property and industry image.

In Pharmaceutical market, there are two main important types of products: Branded Medicines and Generic Medicines. The second type presents a very recent history in India, when comparing with other countries, although it can be considered a huge successful case in the country.

This market is based on three main players: state, doctor and patient. Some of the major concerns in this industry are: government price controls, cost of new launchings and the increasing number of people influencing product choice, which means that it is no more just about the physician. Other forms of information are also important: pharmacist, groups of patients which also means the physician and pharmacist can play a vital role in educating the consumers about generics. Moreover, as patient trust in their physician often overrules their personal mistrust of generic medicines, enhancing the opinions of physicians regarding generics may have particular importance in strategies to market usage and acceptance of generic medicines within the future.

In what concerns the advice by medical entities, it can be concluded that those (doctors and pharmacists) are already advising their patients to follow a generic treatment. In the case of doctors, 27% of the inquiries affirm that they were advised to take a Generic, while in the pharmacist case, 30% confirm the same. It can be concluded that there has been a contribution of those entities to the Generic consumption popularisation.

Another reason that can explain why some people do not follow a Generic treatment is the fact that they do not know that there is a Generic alternative (14%).

It can be concluded that the two main reasons for buying Branded Medicines is due to doctor prescription and due to the faith, that those consumers have for their regular medicines. On the other side, it can also be concluded that the important reasons to buy Generics are its availability at the pharmacy, the quality that medicines possess.

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