

## Study To Evaluate The Attitude Of Homeopathic Physicians Towards Different Homeopathic Brands

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Homeopathy is an alternative way of treatment, which is recognized by the World Health Organization as the 2nd largest mode of treatment worldwide. Homeopathic medicines are safe, non-toxic, non-addictive and produce no side effects generally. According to a survey conducted in Karachi Pakistan, 59.3 % people prefer a complementary and alternative way of treatment including Homeopathy. The satisfaction of Medical practitioners and their clinical decision-making depends upon the products, which they use to treat the patient. Thus, the objective of this study was to evaluate the attitude of Homeopathic physicians towards different Homeopathic brands

**Methodology:** This cross sectional survey was conducted among the Homeopathic Doctors of four different cities including Lahore, Chakwal, Sangla Hill and Safdar Abad. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical review board. After explaining the purpose of the study, verbal consent was taken from all Homeopathic Doctors participated in the survey. A well-designed questionnaire comprising of 13 questions were filled from all participants. Different questions were asked about Pharmaceutical companies regarding the quality and efficacy of their products. Data was analyzed by Likert 5-point scale and preferences of practitioners to certain Company were evaluated by this survey.

**Results:** In this study, 100 Homeopathic Doctors participated from four different cities of Pakistan. Total 90 male and 10 females participated. Overall, 80% Doctors were highly satisfied by the quality and efficacy of Dr Masood's products. According to them, Masood's products are effective and affordable. On the other hand, 53% Doctors were satisfied with Schwabe's products efficacy and packing. Only 38% Doctors preferred B.M Company for their quality of products while 30% practitioners were satisfied with Kent Company and 23% Doctors preferred Brooke's products. Dr Masood Homeopathic pharmaceutical's products are cost-effective that is why 73% practitioners preferred them whereas, 67.20% Doctors think that products of Schwabe are cost effective

**Conclusion:** This survey revealed that homeopathic physicians preferred to use those homeopathic products, which was good in quality, cost effective, attractive in packing, and readily available. In this regard, products of Dr Masood Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals were their first preference. However, products of Schwabe Company were their second preference

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Homeopathy, Trends in homeopathy, Cost-effectiveness of homeopathic medicines, attitude of General practitioners towards CAM

### INTRODUCTION

Homeopathy is an alternative way of treatment which is recognized by the World Health Organization as the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest mode of treatment worldwide (1, 2). This system of medicine has been in clinical practice of alternative practitioners across the globe for over 200 years (3, 4). Homeopathy is widely used not only in Europe, but it is

also popular in U.S.A, India, South America and many other countries including Pakistan (5, 6). Despite its controversial status, Homeopathy's popularity is growing day by day and impressive treatment results have been reported by various clinical trials (4). Globally, \$ 1 billion per year is spent on Homeopathic medications (7). Homeopathic medicines are safe, non-toxic,

non-addictive and produce no side effects generally (8). According to a survey conducted in Karachi Pakistan, 59.3 % people prefer complementary and alternative way of treatment including Homeopathy. Inter-personal communication, satisfaction on alternative treatment and cost effectiveness of homeopathic medicines were the main reasons of their preferences (9). Dissatisfaction with the results of conventional treatment is another possible reason for using Homeopathy (10). In Pakistan, both conventional and alternative system work in their own domain separately (11). There are some General practitioners (GP's) who believe the usefulness of CAM (Complementary & Alternative medicines) while some GP's do not support CAM (12). Homeopathic medicines have no side effects and it is a gentle way of treatment (13).

Homeopathic physicians consider their patients as a unique individual and treat them thoroughly on the constitutional plane (14, 15). Despite the popularity of Homeopathy, it is still facing the controversial status in various countries around the globe due to inconsistent legislation by the state (16). In the modern era, people have different ways of treatment but a majority of people still choose to have an alternative treatment like Homeopathy (17). The satisfaction of Medical practitioners and their clinical decision making depends upon the products which they use to treat the patient (18). Thus, the objective of this study was to evaluate the attitude of Homeopathic physicians towards different Homeopathic brands.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted to evaluate the preferences of Homeopathic practitioners in Pakistan and their reliance on different Homeopathic brands in the market. A cross sectional exploratory and descriptive survey was performed based on pre-designed questionnaire. Ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Review Board. For the study purpose, 100 Homeopathic practitioners were enrolled from four different cities of Pakistan including Lahore, Chakwal, Sangla Hill, and Safdara-Abad.

An open-ended questionnaire was designed comprising of 13 questions in total with few sub questions to get explanations. The purpose of survey was explained to all practitioners. Verbal consent was taken from all physicians prior to filling the questionnaire. The data was analyzed by using Standardized Likert Five-point scale (strongly satisfied, satisfied, Neutral, Dissatisfied, strongly dissatisfied) and Ten-points rating scale.

## RESULTS

A cross sectional exploratory survey was performed to evaluate the preferences of Homeopathic physicians towards different homeopathic products available in the market of Pakistan. In this study, 100 Homeopathic Doctors participated from four different cities of Pakistan including Lahore and small cities like Chakwal, SafdarAbad, and Sangla Hill. In this survey, 90 males and 10 females participated.

### QUESTION 1

In this survey, the first question was asked about the level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction of Homeopathic physician's with Homeopathic system of treatment. Overall, 47% physicians were strongly satisfied with Homeopathic treatment. While 44% were satisfied, 8% were neutral, 1% was dissatisfied, and 0% was strongly dissatisfied as shown in Table No 1.

Questions	Strongly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dis-satisfied	Strongly Dis-Satisfied
How much satisfied you are with Homeopathic treatment	47%	44%	8%	1%	0%

Table No 1: Level of satisfaction

### QUESTION 2

In Question no 2, Physicians were asked to describe the reason of their satisfaction with Homeopathic therapy. Overall, 40% physicians were satisfied owing to good results of homeopathic treatment and 8% physicians believed that Homeopathy strengthens the vital force. However, 17% physicians were satisfied because they believed that it has no side effects and 26% physicians

were satisfied as Homeopathy cures the disease completely as shown in Table no 2.

Reasons Of Satisfaction	Response Of Doctors
Good Results	40%
Strengthens the immunity	11%
No Side effects	17%
Complete cure	26%

Table no 2: Reasons of Satisfaction

**QUESTION 3**

Homeopathic Doctors were asked about reason of their dissatisfaction with Homeopathy. Total 6% Doctors were dissatisfied with Homeopathic treatment. Only 2% Doctors were not satisfied with the use of homeopathic medicines because they noticed that homeopathic medicines gave delayed results. Whereas, 4% Doctors were dissatisfied because they had seen no effects of Homeopathic medication at all as shown in Table No 3

Reason Of Disagreement	Response Of Doctors
Delayed Results	2%
No effects	4%

Table No 3: Reasons of dissatisfaction

**QUESTION 4**

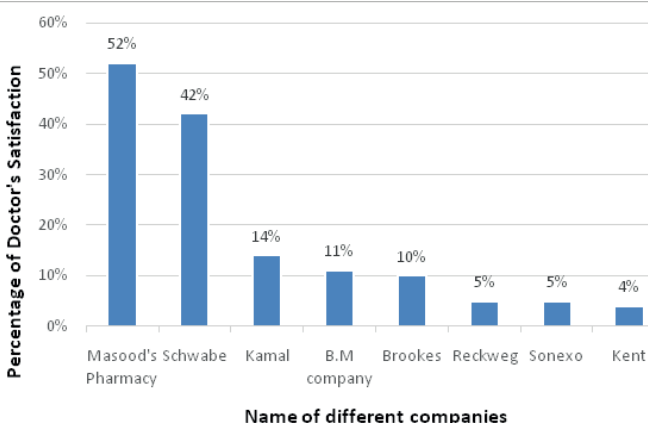
In this question, Homeopathic Doctors were asked about the Homeopathic brands of different pharmaceutical companies. According to them, the following are the companies whose Homeopathic Brands are readily available in the market.

- Dr. Masood's Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals
- Schwabe's Homeopathic company
- Kent homeopathic pharmacy
- Brookes Homeopathic pharmacy
- BM Homeopathic Company
- Kamal Homeopathic Company

- Reckweg and Sonexo Company

**QUESTION 5**

Homeopathic practitioners were asked which company product you like to use more in your practice. Following responses were obtained from Homeopathic physicians. Generally, 52% Doctors were satisfied from Masood's Homeopathic pharmaceuticals, 42% Homeopaths preferred to use Schwabe's products, 14% were satisfied with Kamal pharmacy, 11% with BM Company, 10% considered Brookes company for their products, 5% were satisfied with Reckweg, 5% by Sonexo Company, 4% by Kent Pharmacy and 9% Doctors gave no response as shown in Graph 1.



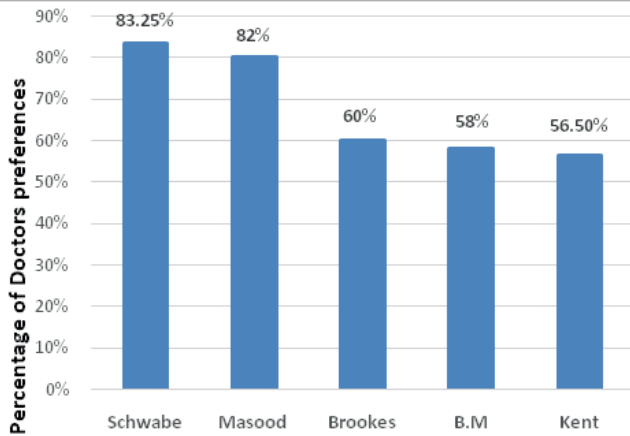
Graph No 1: Satisfaction of Homeopathic Doctors with available Companies

**QUESTION 6**

In this question, practitioners were inquired about the main reasons of their satisfaction with different homeopathic brands. Among them, 82 % Homeopathic practitioners were satisfied by the quality of Dr.Masood's Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals, while 83.25% were satisfied with Schwabe's products and 60% were satisfied with the quality of Brookes Company. On the other hand, 58% physicians were satisfied with the quality of B.M Company products and only 56.50% were satisfied with the quality products of Kent pharmacy as shown in Graph 2.

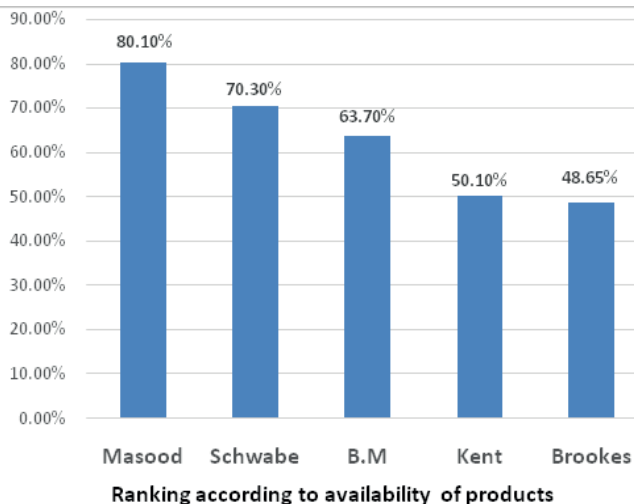
**QUESTION 7**

In this question, practitioners were asked which company



**Ranking of companies according to quality of product**

Graph No 2: Physician's preference according to quality product is easily available in the market. Overall, 80.10% doctors were satisfied with the easy availability of Masood's products and 70.30% were satisfied with Schwabe's availability of products. On the other hand, 63.70% practitioners said that products of B.M Company are easily available in the market and 48.65% showed their satisfaction with easy availability of Brookes Company products in the market as shown in graph 3

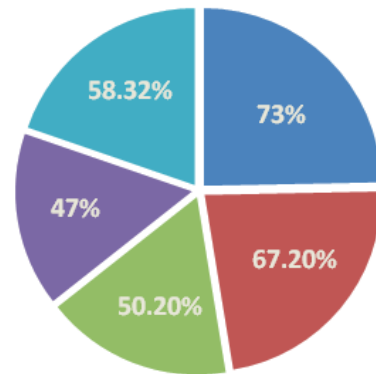


Graph No 3: Doctor's preference according to Availability of products

### QUESTION 8

Price of the product is another important aspect, because of which practitioners choose certain company's products. Dr Masood Homeopathic pharmaceutical's

products are cost-effective that is why 73% practitioners preferred them whereas, 67.20% Doctors think that products of Schwabe are cost effective. On the contrary, 50.20% physicians preferred Kent Company products due to their price range. However, 47% Doctors selected Brookes and 58.32% Doctors preferred to use B.M Company products due to their cost effectiveness as shown in chart 4.



■ Masood ■ Schwabe ■ Kent ■ Brookes ■ B.M

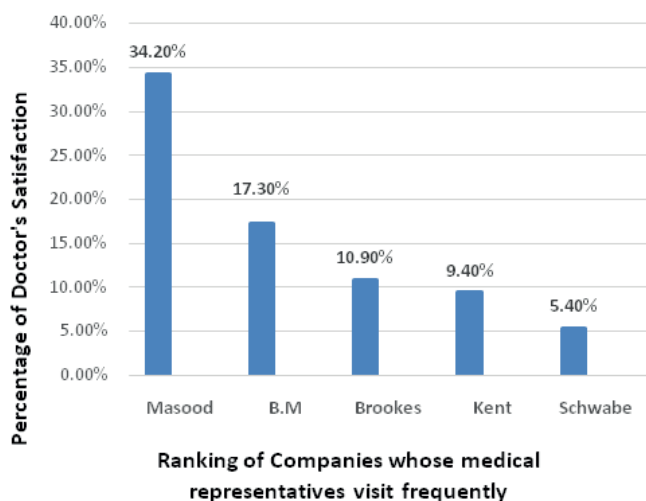
Graph No 4: Doctor's preference according to cost effectiveness of products

### QUESTION 9

In this question, practitioners were also inquired about regular visits of medical representatives of different companies and were asked to rate the companies in accordance to their services. Overall, 34.20% Doctors were satisfied with the regular visits of medical representatives of Masood's company, 17.30% practitioners said that medical representatives of B.M Company visit frequently and describe their products. On the other hand, 10.90% practitioners said that Medical representative of Brookes Company visit off and on as shown in Graph No 5.

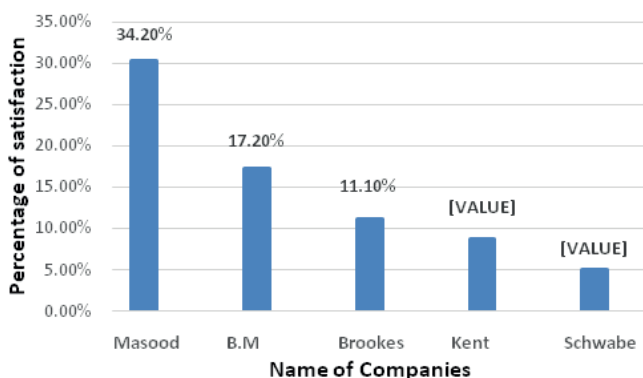
### QUESTION 10

In this survey, Homeopathic practitioners were asked to describe their satisfaction towards services provided by medical representatives. These services were in the form of detailing about company products and the way to convince customers to prescribe that product. Total



Graph No 5: Doctor's satisfaction towards regular visits of Medical Representatives

30.40% Doctors said that medical representatives of Dr. Masood's Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals described their products very well. However, 17.20% physicians said that medical representatives of B.M Company rendered their services in a very good manner and they describe the products in a very efficient way. Only 11.10% doctors were satisfied the services of medical representatives of Brookes Company as shown in Graph No 6.

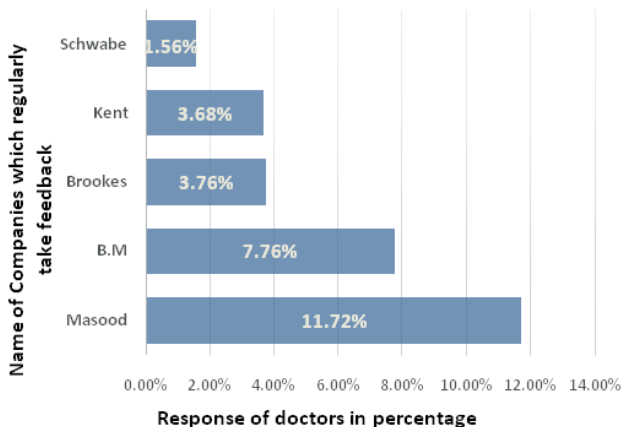


Graph No 6: Doctor's satisfaction with the detailing of products described by Medical Representatives

**QUESTION 11**

Which homeopathic companies take feedback from homeopathic physicians about their products? About this question, only 11.72% doctors said that Doctors Masood Homeopathic Pharmaceutical's representatives take

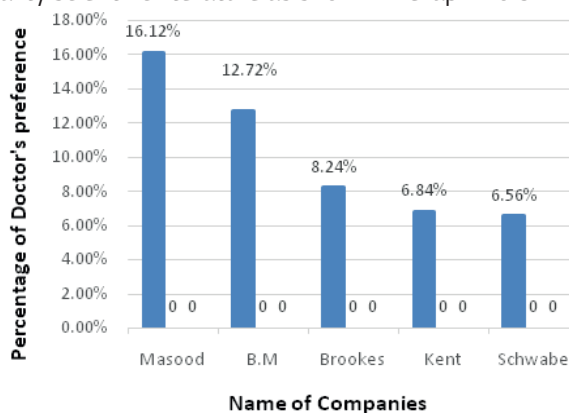
frequently feedback from their consumers about products. However, 7.77% Doctors said that B.M Company take feedback from homeopathic physicians. Brooks, Kent and Schwabe Company also take feedback from doctors about their products as shown in graph 7.



Graph No 7: Companies, which take Regular feedback from their consumers

**QUESTION 12**

In this question, Doctors were asked which company does provide the best scientific literature through their medical representatives. Overall, 16.12% physicians said that Masood's Company provide best informative literature, 12.72% practitioners showed their satisfaction with B.M Company in this regard, 8.24% think that Brookes Company provides good literature to read, whereas, 6.56 % were satisfied with Schwabe and 6.84% Doctors think that Kent Company provides the best quality scientific literature as shown in Graph No 8.

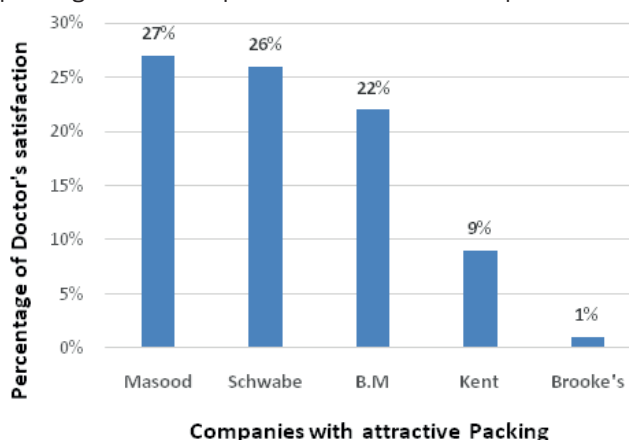


Graph No 8: Doctor's preference according to best

literature provided by companies

### QUESTION 13

Finally, the respondents were asked to mention the company whose product packing attracts them most on the basis of which they like that certain Company. Homeopathic Practitioners rated the different pharmaceutical companies concerning their Packing. Overall, 27% doctors were greatly inspired by the packing of Masood's products. Only 26% doctors said that Schwabe Company products are attractive in packing. However, 22% practitioners were satisfied with the packing of B.M Company products. On the contrary, 9% doctors liked the packing of Kent Company products and only 1% doctors showed their satisfaction towards the packing of Brooke's products as shown in Graph 9.



Graph No 9: Doctor's preference according to attractive Packing of products

### DISCUSSION

Nowadays, half population of world is using Complementary and Alternative Medicine, particularly homeopathy. The main reason behind this is the high levels of satisfaction and awakening growing interest among physicians(19). According to a survey conducted in 11 countries, every year small but a good percentage of the general populations use homeopathy(20). Another study was published in 1995 in the Journal of the American Board of Family Practice and according to this study, 69% of family physicians expressed their interest in learning more about homeopathy (21). Similarly, in

Pakistan rural areas where 80% of the population live, the trend of using complementary and alternative medicines is increasing (17). Thus, this survey was conducted to evaluate the attitude of homeopathic practitioners regarding different available brands.

According to the findings of this survey, 47% Homeopathic Doctors were strongly satisfied with Homeopathic mode of treatment, 44% were satisfied, 8% were neutral, 1% were dissatisfied and 0% were strongly dissatisfied. Majority of Practitioners were highly satisfied with Homeopathic mode of treatment and the reason of their satisfaction was effective results of homeopathic medications. According to 8% homeopathic doctors, homeopathy strengthens the immunity of patients while 26% Doctors said it cures permanently. In the opinion of 17% physicians, Homeopathic medicines cause no side effects. There were only 2% Doctors who were dissatisfied as they had seen delayed results of homeopathy in some cases whereas, 4% practitioners were dissatisfied because they had seen no effects of Homeopathy at all.

As far as the preferences of Homeopathic practitioners towards Market brands are concerned, 52% Doctors preferred products of Dr.Masood's Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals. However, 42% practitioner's preferred to use Schwabe Company products. On the other hand, only 11% Doctors were satisfied with B.M company products while 14% doctors were satisfied with the products of Kamal homeopathic pharmaceuticals.

In many healthcare systems, Affordability and accessibility of medicines is an important issue(22, 23). That is why the majority of practitioners were satisfied with the price and easy availability of Dr Masood Homeopathic pharmaceuticals products. Overall, 67.20% Doctors were satisfied with the price of Schwabe's products. On the other hand, a small but significant percentage of practitioners said that products of B.M and Brookes Company are cost effective and easily available in the market. In the opinion of Homeopathic practitioners, Quality of Schwabe's products was highly



satisfying in comparison to other Companies. Overall, 83.25% doctors were satisfied with the quality of Schwabe's products while 80% doctors were satisfied with the quality of Dr Masood Homeopathic pharmaceuticals.

Every pharmaceutical company send medical representatives to promote and sell their products. Medical representatives are an important component of companies and marketing strategies (24, 25). Total 30.40% Doctors said that medical representatives of Dr. Masood's Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals described their products very well. However, 17.20% physicians said that medical representatives of B.M Company rendered their services in a very good manner and they describe the products in a very efficient way. According to the majority of respondents, "Dr Masood Homeopathic Pharmaceutical's" products packing are attractive and they take frequent feedback from their consumers so that they can improve their products. Overall, 16.12% physicians said that Masood's Company provides the best informative literature.

## CONCLUSION

This survey revealed that homeopathic physicians preferred to use those homeopathic products, which were good in quality, cost effective, attractive in packing, and readily available. In this regard, products of Dr Masood Homeopathic Pharmaceuticals were their first preference. However, products of Schwabe Company were their second preference. Homeopathic physicians ranked B.M company products on third number, and products of Kent on fourth number.

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