

Overview Of Pharmacists' And Prescribers' Perceptions And Attitudes Towards Generic Medicines

Wayne B Mamutse¹, *Babafunso A Adenuga²

¹School of Pharmacy, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Namibia.

²Adex Medical Consult, P.O. Box 99551, Windhoek, Namibia.

*Corresponding Author

Received: Jul 29, 2025; Revised: Oct 15; Accepted: Oct 18; Published: Oct 25, 2025

COPYRIGHT: Mamutse and Adenuga. This article is open-access and published under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY). It permits anyone to copy, distribute, transmit, and adapt the work, provided the original work and source are appropriately cited.

CITATION: Mamutse WB, Adenuga BA. Overview Of Pharmacists' And Prescribers' Perceptions And Attitudes Towards Generic Medicines. Recent Adv Biol Med. 2025; 11(4): 9800047. <https://doi.org/10.18639/RABM.2025.9800047>

KEYWORDS: Pharmacists; Prescribers; Perceptions; Attitudes; Generic Medicines.

ABBREVIATIONS: WHO: World Health Organization; GMP: Good Manufacturing Practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Generic medicines have been defined by WHO as “a pharmaceutical product, usually intended to be interchangeable with an innovator product, that is manufactured without a license from the innovator company and marketed after the expiry date of the patent or other exclusive rights” [1]. Manufacturers of generic medicines seek to formulate pharmaceutical products that are similar to the existing innovator product in the market. It should be highlighted that generic pharmaceuticals production is only possible after the patency of the innovator has expired; this can be up to 10 years, most of the time.

2. RELEVANCE OF GENERIC MEDICINES IN CONTEMPORARY THERAPEUTICS

Affordability, accessibility, quality, safety and efficacy are important concepts that are considered when prescribing medicines. In Low-and Middle-Income Countries, these factors play a major role in saving the lives of the populace. In relative terms, generic medicines can be cheaper or more affordable compared to innovator products; this can be either a blessing or a curse. Quality of medicines is integrally linked to the quality of the manufacturing process; thus, the strict adherence to GMP tenets as laid out by the WHO. It is not always easy to vouch for the quality of generic medicines, considering varying adherence to GMP, which is in variance with the manufacturing processes and environment in which innovator products are being manufactured.

3. PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDES OF PHARMACISTS AND PRESCRIBERS TOWARDS GENERIC MEDICINES

Pharmacists' and prescribers' perceptions and attitudes towards generic medicines vary significantly across different regions and healthcare systems. Overall, both groups generally recognize the efficacy and safety of generics, but concerns about quality and patient perceptions persist. A study carried out in Zimbabwe found that the prices of medicines are linked to the perceived quality of medicines by prescribers and patients. This has a direct impact on the acceptance of generic medicines and the prescribing patterns of prescribers.

4. KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

- A majority of physicians (82.8%) and pharmacists (89.8%) in China correctly identified generic medicines, with similar beliefs about their effectiveness and safety compared to brand-name drugs [2].
- In Ireland, 98% of pharmacists and 88% of GPs believed generics were of similar quality to originators [3].

Both studies assumed a perceived acceptance of generic medicines as equivalent to innovator medicines.

5. ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENERIC SUBSTITUTION

- In China, 67.6% of healthcare providers supported generic substitution, with 79.4% of physicians actively prescribing generics [2].
- Conversely, in Ethiopia, a significant number of physicians (70.6%) reported low rates of generic prescriptions, indicating a gap in practice despite awareness [4].

Locally manufactured medicines can be more acceptable to patients, considering their knowledge of the manufacturer compared to an imported generic medicine. Counterfeit, fake and adulterated medicines are commonplace among imported pharmaceuticals, leading to reduced confidence in patients towards such products.

Perceptions and attitudes toward generic medicines among healthcare professionals

Dimension	Pharmacists	Prescribers (Doctors/Nurses)
Knowledge and Awareness	Generally well-informed about generics and bioequivalence	Varies; some express uncertainty about therapeutic equivalence
Attitude Towards Substitution	Often supportive, especially in cost-reduction contexts	May resist substitution due to concerns over patient response or brand loyalty
Perception of Quality	Trust in quality if approved by regulatory authorities	Some concerns persist about manufacturing standards and clinical outcomes
Patient Communication	Active role in educating patients about generic efficacy and safety	Limited discussion; often defers to pharmacist or assumes patient preference
Cost Consideration	Strongly favour generics for affordability and broader access	Recognize cost benefits but balance against perceived clinical effectiveness
Regulatory Confidence	High confidence in regulatory frameworks (e.g., bioequivalence standards)	Mixed views—some question the robustness of local approval systems
Barriers to Use	Stock availability and patient misconceptions	Clinical inertia, preference for branded drugs, and lack of training
Support for Policy Adoption	Generally supportive of generic substitution policies	Conditional support—may favour voluntary substitution rather than mandatory

Source: Microsoft Copilot

6. CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

- Common challenges include a lack of trust in generics' efficacy and safety, with many healthcare providers citing patient complaints and preconceived notions about generics as barriers to acceptance [5].
- In less developed healthcare systems, concerns about quality and regulatory standards are more pronounced, affecting prescribers' willingness to recommend generics [6].

7. CONCLUSION

Despite the overall positive attitudes towards generics, scepticism remains, particularly regarding their quality and the influence of marketing on prescribing practices. Addressing these concerns through education and policy may enhance acceptance and utilization of generic medicines.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

None.

ORCID

WBM: not available

BAA: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1475-3655>

REFERENCES

1. Shargel L, Kanfer I. Generic drug product development: Solid oral dosage forms. 2014; CRC Press, Boca Raton. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9781420030419>
2. Qu J, Zuo W, Took RL, Schafmeyer KW, Lukas S, Wang SC, *et al.* A nationwide survey exploring physicians' and pharmacists' knowledge, awareness and perceptions regarding generic medicines in China. BMC Health Serv Res. 2022;22(1):1069. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-022-08438-9>
3. Dunne SS, Shannon B, Cullen W, Dunne CP. Beliefs, perceptions and behaviours of GPs towards generic medicines. Family Pract. 2014;31(4):467–474. <https://doi.org/10.1093/FAMPRA/CMU024>
4. Gebresillassie BM, Belachew SA, Tefera YG, Abebe T, Mekuria AB, Haile KT, *et al.* Evaluating patients', physicians' and pharmacy professionals' perception and concern regarding generic medicines in Gondar town, northwest Ethiopia: A multi-stakeholder, cross-sectional survey. PLoS One. 2018;13(11):e0204146. <https://doi.org/10.1371/JOURNAL.PONE.0204146>
5. Dunne SS, Shannon B, Cullen W, Dunne CP. Perceptions and attitudes of community pharmacists towards generic medicines. J Manag Care Pharm. 2014;20(11):1138–1146. <https://doi.org/10.18553/JMCP.2014.20.11.1138>
6. Toverud EL, Hartmann K, Håkonsen H. A systematic review of physicians' and pharmacists' perspectives on generic drug use: What are the global challenges? Appl Health Econ Health Policy. 2015;13(1):35–45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/S40258-014-0145-2>