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Original Article

A Comparative Study on the Regulation of Advertising Pharmaceutical and Medical Products: The Case of Iran, China, and Turkey

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Abstract

Background: Regulatory authorities in each country strive to protect public health through legislation, regulation, and standardization to ensure the quality, safety, effectiveness, labeling, marketing, and proper advertising of pharmaceutical products throughout the life cycle of the product. Regulation in the field of advertising pharmaceutical and medical products is the supervision of all informative and persuasive promotional activities of the pharmaceutical industry with the aim of influencing the prescription, supply, purchase, and use of drugs.

Methods: Having conducted the comparative analysis as the methodology of the current research, the regulations and structures for monitoring the advertising of pharmaceutical and medical products in China and Turkey were compared with the established ones in Iran.

Results: According to this study, the advertising regulation mechanism of pharmaceutical and medical products in Iran, comparing with China and Turkey, faces four main problems including: 1) lack of a single administrator in monitoring the advertising of pharmaceutical and medical products, 2) ambiguity in the licensing or non-licensing of medicine advertised to the public in Iranian law, 3) non-transparent regulations on how to advertise to physicians, and 4) the lack of a self-regulatory body with the membership in pharmaceutical companies and distributors in order to develop codes of practice for the trade union to create healthy competition and prevent advertising violations.

Conclusion: In Iran, it is necessary to codify and approve a comprehensive and transparent law in the field of marketing and advertising of pharmaceutical and medical products by designating a supervisory body and promulgating advertising standards (Both to the general public and to the professional audience).

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