

BACKGROUND

- Incentive-linked prescribing is a prevalent but poorly documented form of corruption that occurs when doctors accept personal benefits from pharma companies.
- These medicines are prescribed to meet pharma sales targets.
- The prescribed medicines are often unnecessary and costly that affect the patients and pose negative consequences.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore patient's awareness of Incentive-linked prescribing
- To document their perspectives on its effects on patient's health and well-being

METHODS

- A qualitative study design was implemented to conduct In-depth interviews with 25 patients who visited various pharmacies located in different districts of Karachi
- After transcribing, thematic analysis was performed using NVivo (version.12) to analyze the data

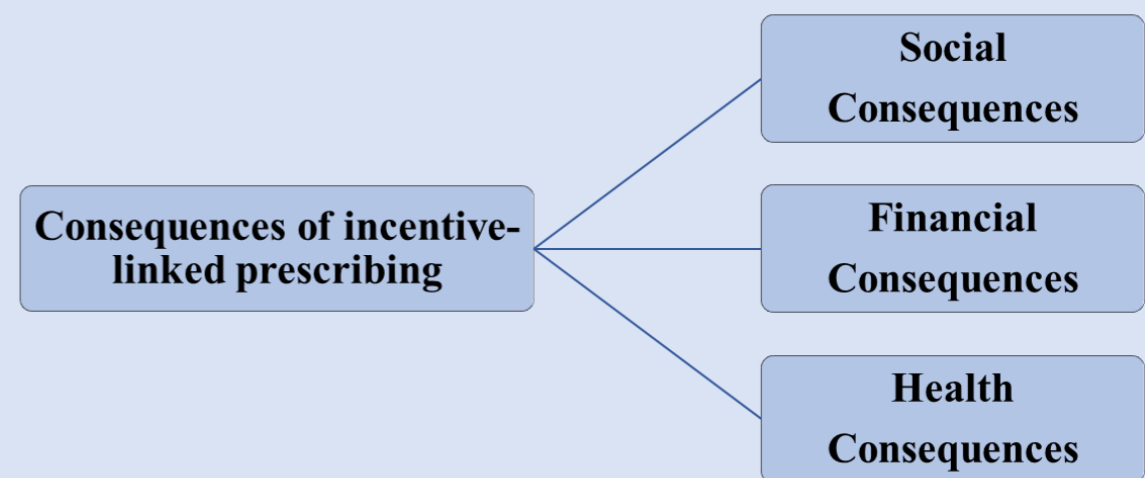
Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics

Gender	
Male	20
Female	05
Age	
18-30	10
31-40	08
41-50	07
Education	
Grade 1-10	06
College Education	05
University Education	11
No Education	03
Occupation	
Manual Worker	04
Salaried Jobholder	06
Self-Employed	07
Student	04
Unemployed	04

Affiliations

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RESULTS



- The patients believed that incentive-linked prescribing affected their health and their financial and social standing.
- Most of the participants believed that the prescribing of expensive pharmaceutical brands when less expensive alternatives were available in the market, was a clear sign of incentive-linked prescribing.
- The financial constraints limited the ability of the patients to buy medications, which compelled them to borrow money from relatives or friends & added to the increased mental distress
- Patients also held several beliefs about how the prescribing of unnecessary medications could impact their physical health, which might/might not be biomedically correct

CONCLUSION

- Incentive-linked prescribing was a public secret, and it contributed to the deterioration of patient's trust in physicians.
- Health system reforms such as doctor's education on the consequences of incentive-linked prescribing, clear guidelines on the relationship between Private doctors and pharmaceutical companies, and regulatory controls are critical, to improve doctor's prescribing practices, which are in patients' best interests.

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