

“DOOR MAN” (Documentation of Objectionable advertisement and Reporting under Magic and Remedies Act Notification) Android Mobile App for AYUSH Magical Remedial Act Programmes: An Efficient and Easy Way of Assessing Magic Remedies Act

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ABSTRACT

Background: “DOOR MAN” (Documentation Of Objectionable advertisement and Reporting under Magic and Remedies Act Notification) Android Mobile App is a pioneer app of its kind in AYUSH which helps in documenting, reporting and improve the communication of safety issues related to false claims, magic and misleading advertisements. Siddha Central Research Institute, Chennai is a Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centre developed “DOOR MAN”, a free smartphone app which will be available on Android stores, after beta version deployment. In recent times, the incidence of false claims, magic and misleading advertisements with embellished claims on efficacy has increased by multiple folds. These Indian legislations govern the ‘Schedule J of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules’ and ‘Drugs and Magic Remedies Act’ advertisement related to drugs, treatments and procedures. As per the statement from Honourable Minister, Ministry of AYUSH has come across 804 instances of misleading advertisements/claims allegedly of herbal/AYUSH products & services including Ayurvedic medicines during the period of last two years and current year from April, 2015 to January, 2018 as reported from the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) and the Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA) portal maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Aim: This Android Application helps to enforce Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, in AYUSH, which will attempt to capture the advertisements, videos, Tv shows, Pamphlets related to drugs, treatments and procedures appearing irrespective their rationality, truthfulness and violation of Indian Legislations specific to Magic Remedies Act.

Methods: 15 single questionnaires in the report form were combined in the App. Algorithms were written and mobile app was designed using Android Studio with Eclipse plug-in along with SDK tools and manager. The app runs on android based Operating System of version 2.1 or higher.

Results: This Android app helps in capturing real time Misleading advertisements, tele-marketing, multi-level marketing, direct selling which promotes various products by making unrealistic claims. It will lessen the time consumption and promotes the habit of being vigilant in Drugs and Magic Remedies Act. This App enhance the AUSH Physician, Pharmacist, Health Worker, Nurse, Social Worker, NGO, Others (Including Public) to report. This app would be a boon to the AYUSH community which has responsibility to preserve legacy and ensure its credibility which should not compromised for cheap publicity or short-term economic gains.

Conclusion: “DOOR MAN” android mobile app can be an effective method to capture Misleading Advertisements and can become an important tool in strengthening the AYUSH Community.

Key words: “DOOR MAN”, Android mobile APP, Drugs and Magic Remedies Act, Siddha, AYUSH, Misleading advertisements.

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INTRODUCTION

"No drug may purport or claim to prevent or cure or may convey to the intending user thereof any idea that it may prevent or cure one or more of the diseases or ailments specified in Schedule J" and advertise medications that are for conditions which are regulated under the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954.¹ Now-a-days industry is aiming to maximize the profit either by direct selling to consumer by advertising of its products through media.² Drug advertising has become a platform in India in recent years to promote false drug claims and exaggerate drug efficacy using eminent public personalities or celebrities as Brand Ambassadors. False advertising affects consumer health.³ Inapt and improper promotion mislead consumers and violates their right to correct information that protects them against risky products and biased services. The annoying competition in the form of false advertisements can hinder consumer decision.⁴ The current Drug and Cosmetic Act and Rules (DCA&R) contain regulatory provisions for and Ayurvedic, Siddha, Unani (ASU) drugs. Understandably, the nature of allopathic drugs and ASU drugs are distinctly different from each other. However, many issues related to safety, quality and efficacy remain common to any drug - be it modern or ASU. Media regulators have also been approached to prevent the publication of inappropriate advertisements promoting sale of Ayurvedic and other AYUSH medicines in public interest. On this account, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has issued instructions/guidelines dated 12th July, 2017 to all media channels to advertise only those products which have valid manufacturing license and to abstain from telecasting such misleading advertisements which are in contravention of the provisions of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 and Rules thereunder. Consumers' complaints about misleading claims or advertisements of AYUSH and herbal medicines registered in the GAMA (Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements) portal of the Department of Consumer Affairs are examined by a Nodal Officer appointed in the Ministry of AYUSH and are forwarded to the concerned State Regulatory Authorities for necessary action in accordance with the legal provisions.⁵ At the international level, prescription and OTC drug advertisement policies coined as "Ethical criteria for medicinal drug promotion", are proposed by World Health Organization (WHO).⁶ In India, principles of prescription drug advertising are regulated by the "Organization of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI)".⁷ The "**DOOR MAN**" a free smartphone app which will be available on Android stores, after beta version deployment. "**DOOR MAN**" App is an android based mobile application, works on system with android V6 OS 2.0 or higher.

This Android app helps in capturing real time Misleading advertisements, tele-marketing, multi-level marketing, and direct selling which promotes various products by making unrealistic claims. It will lessen the time consumption and promotes the habit of being vigilant in Drugs and Magic Remedies Act. This app would be a boon to the AYUSH community which has responsibility to preserve legacy and ensure its credibility which should not be compromised for cheap publicity or short-term economic gains. It helps to streamline the process of Misleading advertisements reporting and analysis. Using of the app is made very simple with the help of user-friendly user interface (UI). The user has to fill the information in the required fields to report Misleading advertisements which promotes unrealistic claims. The user will then send the form to the peripheral pharmacovigilance centre. Where a staff will follow up the reported unrealistic claims for further analysis. The user is free to send the report to peripheral

pharmacovigilance centre by E-mail. This is the monopoly app first of its kind for AYUSH systems. This app has increasingly incorporated information and communications technology (ICT). Publics can also upload unrealistic claims / Videos/ Ads online. This app provides a role for taking pictures / videos and to upload. Data on intensive monitoring are now collected via the Internet and smartphones.

METHODS

Currently no gold standard assessment tool has been proven for Misleading advertisements therefore, Customised tool were developed for the development of our app. The designed tool has been validated. The "**DOOR MAN**" app was developed using questionnaire-based tool for capturing real time Misleading advertisements using an algorithm built by a Siddha team from the Siddha Central research Institute in 2018. Development and Publishing the App into Google Play Store. The app was developed using the android application development. The development processes are divided into two main phases which are alpha and beta versions. For the development of the "**DOOR MAN**" ADR app Windows 10 by Microsoft was used as the operational system. Android studio was used during the alpha and beta version process and Android Emulator were then used to provide communication between running browser and android mobile Android studio is a free downloadable version with official integrated development environment (IDE) for Android application development. It is based on the IntelliJ IDEA, a Java integrated development environment for software, and incorporates its code editing and developer tools. After all the production phases were completed, the app was then saved in an APK file and then uploaded into the Google Play Developer Console. Once the "**DOOR MAN**" ADR app was published in Google Play Store, it could then be downloaded and installed for free by Android OS users. The app was designed without storage capacity to avoid issues regarding patient confidentiality or personal data. Therefore, information input into the system is not available to anyone.

RESULTS

APP DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLICATION

The alpha version of "**DOOR MAN**" was developed which fulfilled the objective of the development. The app will be freely downloadable from Google Play Store after deployment. Archetype screenshots of alpha version "**DOOR MAN**" app is shown below in figures 1-7.

DISCUSSION

Drugs and Magic Remedies Act 1954 (DMRA) that should be enforced which need some modification. The DMRA was endorsed in 1950s to prevent prejudicial practices by Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani (ASU) practitioners such as dishonest and free advertisements that could harm and mislead patients. As technology advances we are now possible to perform evidence-based treatment with both allopathic and ASU medications. DMRA should be properly adopted by governance in respect to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and Food Safety Standards Act to ensure safety and quality of healthcare to patients. Pre- approval by FDA should be adopted prior for TV or Newspaper advertisement for drugs comes under Schedule J and DMRA, and drug manufacturer shore borne the fees for the process. The pharmaceutical company is responsible for making clinically incorrect or unverified claims.

CONCLUSION

“DOOR MAN” app will be capturing real time Misleading advertisements which promotes false claims like sexual pleasure, weight loss, breast development, baldness, skin fairness which are against Schedule J and DMRA 1954, such type of incurable diseases companies can't give any advertisement. Government should strongly enforce law to protect public peoples from these types of false claims given via news, TV, ads etc,

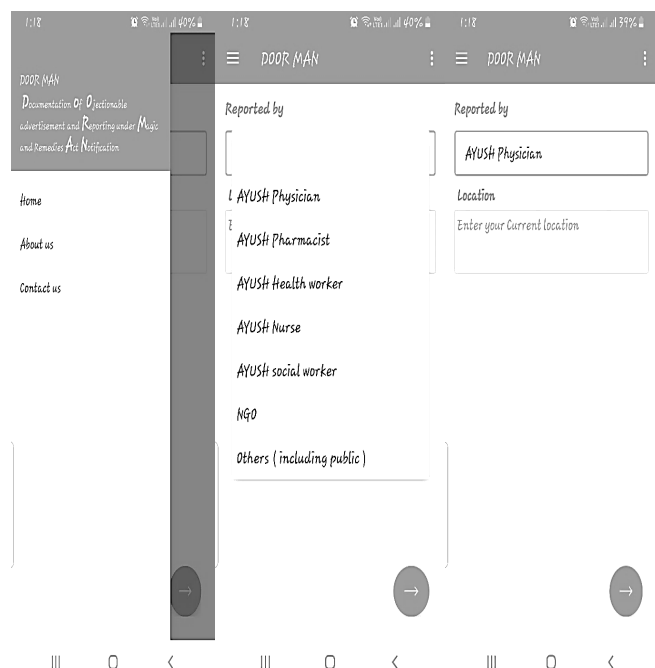


Fig 1

Fig 2

Fig 3

Fig 4

Fig 5

Fig 6

Fig 7

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