

## Improvement of Consumer's Understanding of Drug Leaflet Content

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### ABSTRACT

*In many countries, drug leaflets are usually provided along with drug products in order that consumers can read, understand and follow the instructions for effective and safe medication. However, there are inadequacies regarding consumer's understanding of leaflet content and these may lead to inappropriate medication. The objective of this study is to identify factors that can improve consumer understanding of leaflet content. Content format and behavior in reading drug leaflets are proposed to affect such understanding. A two-group experimental design was conducted by using two content formats. Format A is an actual content format of a drug, while format D is a developed format based on the derived principle: use simple and clear words, emphasize important words, separate sentences into items if possible and order content. Subjects recruited from university students are randomly divided into two equivalent groups. Each group is assigned to read format A or format D and then asked to answer a questionnaire, measuring content understanding and reading behavior. Results reveal that the format D group has a significantly higher mean score of understanding than the other, Both content format and reading behavior significantly affect consumer understanding, and the former has a larger effect than the latter. Therefore, in order to improve consumer's understanding, an important factor is to develop a more understandable leaflet content based on the derived principle used. An additional factor is to promote consumers to read drug leaflets.*

**Key words:** Consumer's understanding, Drug leaflet content

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

In a health care system, drugs are usually employed as a means of curing people's diseases. Drugs taken by consumers could possibly produce both positive and negative effects in their bodies (Edwards and Aronson, 2000). Due to the two-sided effects of any drug, the main purpose of drug therapy is to obtain maximum effectiveness from positive effect and maximum safety from negative effect. To achieve this purpose, consumers must necessarily know and use drugs properly. Written drug information is a source that can give such knowledge and usage. Drug leaflet is a medium of written drug information that can provide necessary drug information to consumers. WHO recognizes the importance of drug leaflet/label and recommends guidelines concerning content (WHO, 2000). Similarly, many