



## QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN INDIA

## Pharma

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## ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION:** Medical representatives (MRs) are the backbone of any pharmaceutical company. They face several hurdles in their work which can impact their quality of life (QOL). Thus we performed this study since there is paucity of such studies done among MRs in India.

**METHODOLOGY:** Seventy MRs from various pharmaceutical companies all over India who attended PSG Hospital and Lakshmi Skin & cosmetology clinic, Coimbatore participated in this study. The demographic details were collected using a structured questionnaire. The details regarding QOL was collected using brief version of WHO's QOL scale (WHOQOL-BREF). The data was statistically analysed.

**RESULTS:** Majority of the medical representatives were between the age group of 26 and 35 (75.7%). Majority of the MRs were male (98.6%). Most of the participants in this study had done their non-pharmaceutical degree (87.2%). The respondents in this study were mainly the territory sales representative (65.7%). The quality of psychological, social and environmental health is better when the monthly salary is above Rs.25,000. The respondents from well-established pharmaceutical companies had better QOL. The overall QOL is claimed to be good among majority of the responders (60%).

**CONCLUSION:** The QOL is good among MRs in this study. But there are several stressors mentioned in this study which needs to be considered and necessary measures need to be taken by the pharmaceutical companies to improve the QOL of the MRs.

## KEYWORDS

## INTRODUCTION

The medical representatives (MRs) are the backbone of pharmaceutical companies. A MR's job is to promote and sell their company's products, whether that's pharmaceutical drugs or medical equipment. The medical representative will introduce new products, increase product awareness, answer queries, provide information to doctors & pharmacists, negotiate contracts, attend and organize trade exhibitions, conferences and meetings etc. Medical representatives face several problems during their work schedule. Since MRs have to meet physicians at different places and at different times, which at times requires meeting physician at odd hours, constant travelling and targets to be achieved which is related to their work, their routine schedule many a times is affected thus hindering their productivity at work, causes stress and has an adverse impact on their quality of life. [1-4] There aren't much studies conducted to assess the quality of life (QOL) among medical representatives. Thus we performed this study to assess their quality of life.

## METHODOLOGY

Seventy medical representatives from various pharmaceutical companies all over India who attended PSG Hospital and Lakshmi Skin & Cosmetology Clinic, Coimbatore were included in the study after obtaining their consent to participate in the study.

Initially demographic details namely their age, gender, marital status, educational qualification, experience, designation salary, etc were collected using a structured questionnaire. We used the brief version of the WHO's QOL scale (WHOQOL-BREF) in this study which had 26 questions. [5] The WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire contains two broad items namely: Overall QOL and General Health. The rest 24 items are divided into four domains: Physical health with 7 items (domain 1), psychological health with 6 items (domain 2), social relationships with 3 items (domain 3) and environmental health with 8 items (domain 4). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale which is scored from 1 to 5 on a response scale. Domain scores are scaled in a positive direction (i.e., higher scores denote higher QOL). The mean score of items within each domain is used to calculate the domain score. After computing the scores, they are transformed linearly to a 0-100-scale.

The collected data was coded, tabulated and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21. Descriptive analyses performed include frequencies, percentages, ranges, mean, and standard deviations (SD). Paired t-test and ANOVA were used to analyze the association between means scores of different domains of WHOQOL-BREF and the various demographic parameters of the respondents.

## RESULTS

The predominant age group of the MRs was between 26 and 35 years (75.7%) followed by 25 years and below (14.3%). The respondents were predominantly male (98.6%). About 50 respondents (71.4%) were married. Regarding the educational qualification, UG and PG non-pharmacy degree were acquired by 41(58.6%) and 20(28.6%) respondents respectively. Pharmacy degree was acquired by 9 respondents (12.9%). The details regarding the designation of MRs are mentioned in the **table 1**.

The experience duration of the MRs in the company they are working currently is 5 years and below in 53 MRs (75.7%) followed by duration between 6 and 10 years in 10 MRs (14.3%). The total duration of experience as MR among the participants was 5 years and below in 30 (42.9%) and was between 6 to 10 years in 28 (40%) participants. The monthly salary in the range of Rs.25,000 to 35,000 was seen in majority of the respondents (42.9%) followed by between Rs.15,000 to 25,000 (21.4%) and between Rs.35,000 to 50,000 (21.4%). The overall QOL is claimed to be good among majority of the responders (60%) followed by average in 22.9% responders. The overall quality of health is good in the majority of responders (44.3%) followed by average (28.6%) and poor (21.4%). The quality of physical life is good in majority of responders (62.9%) followed by average (35.7%) and poor (1.4%). The quality of psychological health is good in majority of the respondents (68.6%) followed by average (22.9%). The social life is good in majority of the respondents (44.3%) followed by average (28.6%) and very good (20%). Environmental health is good in majority of the respondents (48.6%) followed by average (37.1%).

The social and environmental health is better as the experience is more than 10 years. The quality of life is better among the respondents who are employed for more than 5 years in the same company in the following domains: psychological, social and environmental health. The quality of psychological, social and environmental health is better when the monthly salary is above Rs.25,000. The respondents from well-established pharmaceutical companies had better QOL. There was no significant association between QOL and following factors: educational qualification and designation.

## DISCUSSION

Mrs are inevitable component of pharmaceutical companies. The success of the pharmaceutical products depends on them as they are the ones who meet the doctors and the health care providers frequently.

Majority of the MRs are in the age group between 26 and 35 (75.7%)

because MR job requires a lot of efforts to be put in travelling and needs dynamic people with maturity in their approach. The respondents were predominantly male (98.6%) since this field suits well for the men. The single women medical representative has mentioned in the questionnaire that she find the profession burdensome and stressful.

Majority of the respondents are married (71.4%) since many of them are between the age group of 26 to 35. Most of the participants in this study had done their non-pharmaceutical degree. This shows that the qualification is no bar to this job since the communicative skills, marketing skills and dynamism are the main traits involved. Whereas, people from pharmaceutical courses understands the scientific aspect of the medications they promote in a better way. Majority of the participants in this study were Territory Sales Representative (65.7%) since they are beginners in the hierarchy and meet the doctors regularly. As they get promoted their frequency of visiting the doctor comes down as they have larger area to cover.

Majority of the respondents had their total experience less than 10 years (82.9%). This is because after experience of more than 10 years, they get promoted to higher designations during when they will be in-charge of a larger area so the frequency of them visiting the doctors will be less. The duration of experience in the present company was less than 5 years in majority of the respondents (75.7%) this is because this profession is characterized by frequent change in companies among the medical representatives when they are offered better salary packages.

The overall quality of life is claimed to be good among majority of the responders (60%) followed by average in 22.9% responders. The social and environmental health is better as the experience is more than 10 years. This is because of the fact that the stress of travelling comes down as they are promoted to higher designations and they get a better pay. The respondents from well-established pharmaceutical companies had better QOL because they were offered better salary packages and benefits.

### SUGGESTIONS

- The travel hours and area to be covered must be limited and should be convenient so that the stress of travelling should not felt among the medical representatives. Long travelling hours is the main cause of back and body pain among the medical representatives.
- The medical representatives should be given a reasonable target and not a very unrealistic one. This will avoid stress among them and will give a better health and sleep.
- The medical representatives must be given prior appointment by the doctors so that they need not wait for long time in the doctor's clinic.
- The lady representative must be given job roles considering their limitations.
- They must be given better salary package and benefits.
- They must be given good training, confidence enhancement programs and motivation programs periodically.
- They must feel a good work satisfaction to minimize the attrition.
- The people with pharmacy degree and marketing degree should be given more importance since they will have more idea about the aspects of the field involved.
- The pharmaceutical companies must teach exercises and relaxation techniques to the medical representatives.
- The pharmaceutical companies must provide them family recreational programs frequently so that they can spend more time with their family and relax.
- Periodical health check up to be provided to the medical representatives.

### CONCLUSION

The quality of life is good among MRs in this study. But they have some stressors such as long hours of travel, long waiting hours, irregular food timings, being apart from their family often and targets to be achieved. Thus the pharmaceutical companies must consider such problems faced by them and they must provide facilities and benefits to the medical representatives so that this field becomes more friendly and enjoyable.

**Table 1: The Designation Of MRs Who Participated In This Study**

S. No	Designation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Territory Sales Officer/Representative	46	65.7
2	Area Sales Manager	16	22.9
3	Regional Sales Manager	05	7.1
4	Zonal Sales Manager	02	2.9
5	National Sales Manager	01	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	

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