

## THE ROLE OF PROMOTION ON MARKETING IN TURKISH DRUG INDUSTRY

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### Abstract

*Marketing has an important role in modern life. Marketing provides economical and social benefits with correlating between producers and consumers.*

*Promotional activities are necessary for better marketing strategies. Therefore, firms have to give more importance to promotional activities. Promotional activities are marketing instruments that announced all the knowledges about the products and services to their consumers, for surviving and developing the firms.*

*Nowadays drug producers are marketing their products all around the world. But, drugs are not ordinary products, for this reason more importance must be given to drug marketing and promotion.*

*The purpose of this study is to determine the role of promotion within the marketing in Turkish Drug Industry. The material of this study is an uniform questionnaire with 41 questions applied to about 190-200 medical representatives who work in Çorum, Yozgat, Amasya and Tokat cities for 37 firms which are the members of Federation of Employer's Organization in Pharmaceutical Industry and 14 firms which are profited by the services of this federation.*

*In this study, SPSS program (ver7.5) has been used for evaluation of the data. According to the results, medical representatives think that the drug sales will increase and wait the data of IMS (Inform Medicines Statistics) will rise about 60-80%. 90% of the medical representatives believe that the paramedical activities are effective and 73% of them carry out paramedical studies.*

**Key Words:** Drug Promotion, Promotion, Marketing, Sales Representatives, Turkish Drug Industry.

### Türk İlaç Sanayiinde Pazarlama Üzerinde Tanıtımın Rolü

*Pazarlama modern yaşantıda önemli bir role sahiptir. Pazarlama üreticiler ve tüketiciler arasında bir ilişki kurarak, ekonomik ve sosyal faydalar sağlar. Tanıtım faaliyetleri daha iyi bir pazarlama stratejisi için gereklidir. Bu nedenle şirketler daha iyi bir pazarlama stratejisi için tanıtım faaliyetlerine önem vermelidir. Tanıtım faaliyetleri, işletmenin ürettiği mal ve hizmetleri tüketicilere duyuran, işletmenin gelişimini ve yaşamasını sağlayan bir pazarlama aracıdır*

*Günümüzde ilaç üreticileri, ürettikleri ürünleri tüm dünyada pazarlamaktadırlar. Ancak, ilaç herhangi bir ürün olmadığı için, pazarlamasına ve tanıtımına dikkat edilmelidir.*

*Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk İlaç Sanayii'nde pazarlama faaliyetleri arasında yer alan ilaç tanıtımının sektör üzerindeki etkilerinin incelenmesidir. Çalışmanın materyalini İstanbul ilinde bulunan, İlaç Endüstrisi İşverenler Sendikası üyesi olan 37 ve sendika hizmetlerinden yararlanan 14 firma bünyesinde ve Çorum, Yozgat, Amasya, Tokat illerinde çalışan sayıları 190-200 olan tıbbi mümessiller için hazırlanan 41 soruluk anket formları oluşturmaktadır.*

*Araştırmada verilerin değerlendirilmesi için SPSS (ver. 7.5) istatistik paket programı kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda elde edilen sonuçlara göre, tıbbi mümessiller, tanıtım ile ilgili çalışmalar sonucunda ilaç satışlarının artacağını düşünmektedir ve buna bağlı olarak IMS (Informational Medicine Statistics) verilerinde % 60-80 oranında artış olacağını beklemektedirler. Çalışmaya katılan tıbbi mümessillerin % 90'ı tanıtımda para-medikal çalışmaların etkinliğine inanmakta ve % 73'ü tanıtımda para-medikal çalışma yapmaktadır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** İlaç Tanıtımı, Tanıtım, Pazarlama, Tıbbi Mümessil, Türk İlaç Sanayi.

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## **Introduction**

Promotion has more attractive features than advertising and other marketing functions. Promotion when lets uprising sales to good services and products, can not verify worthless products to live longer (1).

Drug is an important product for human health. Drug producers have an important and necessary mission for the human health, because they serve new and developed products for the society.

Today, drug producers market the products which they invent and developed. But more importance has been given to drug marketing, because drug is not an ordinary thing.

Drug promotion is sensed as an important subject all around the world. In our country, drugs are being marketed and promoted in a way forever years. But as in all sectors, some problems occur about promotion in drug sector. The main problem is the positive or negative effects on sector about the subjective or objective behaving of marketing and promotion strategies which applied by the drug firms.

In Turkey, medical products which wanted to be given inner market are under the control of Health Ministry by the 1262 numbered law 'Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Drugs Law' which inured in 1928 and regulated in 1948. And related to this 'The Regulation of Medical Factory made Pharmaceutics Promotion' was published in 07.09.1990 number 20628 in The Official Gazette (2). The aim of this regulation is to set the rules of chemical, vegetal and biological originated Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Drugs Promotions which are used in order to save human beings from disease, diagnosis, treatment or changing a function of a part of the body, and according to this to able the rational usage of this Pharmaceutics (3,4).

Drug promotions are the convincing activities for drugs, to be written in recipe, assurance, sales and/or reason for usage, by producers, importers and distributors (5).

In this study, the aim is defined 'How are the Promotion activities acted and how do they effect the drug sales or in what constant they are effective on marketing.'

## **Experimental**

Materials of this study are formed by the questionnaire with 41 questions and applied to representatives, working in Çorum, Yozgat, Amasya, Tokat regions, workers of 51 different firms in pharmaceutical industry. 37 of which are the members of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association and 14 of which uses the services provided by the Association.

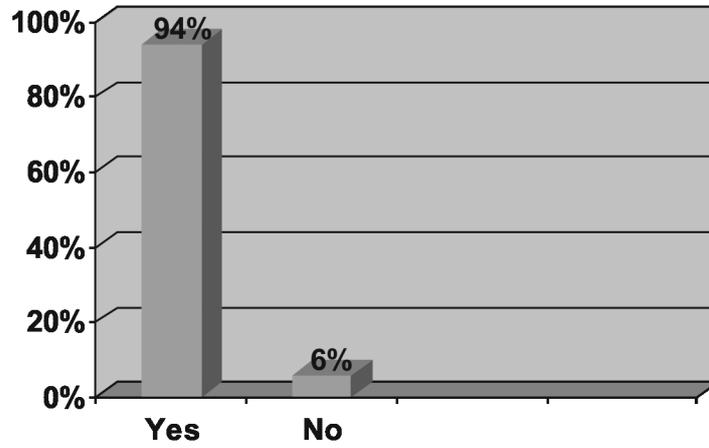
The questionnaire forms were applied to 200 representatives by face to face and by mail. 135 questionnaire forms were taken under consideration. Which is the 67.5% of the region. This number is considered enough statistically because of being bigger than 30 % (6).

In this study, SPSS program (ver7.5) has been used for evaluation of the data.

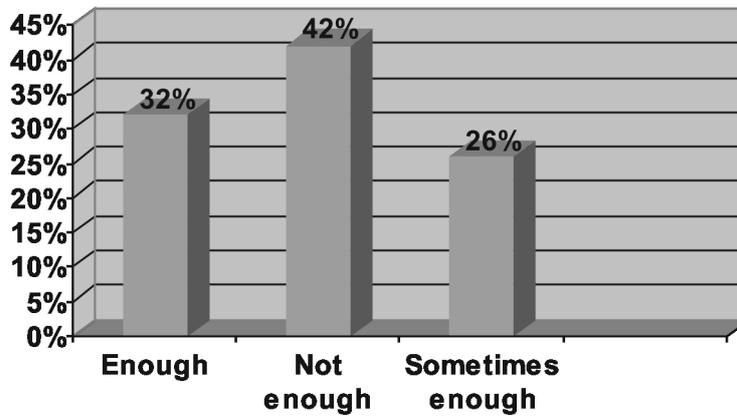
## **Results**

The participant representatives ages were; 23-25 (3%), 26-28 (54%), 29-31 (33%) and older than 32 (9%). 24% of them had a high school degree and 76% of them had a university degree. 64% of them worked in another sector before, 53 % of them work in the same firms mostly for 2 years.

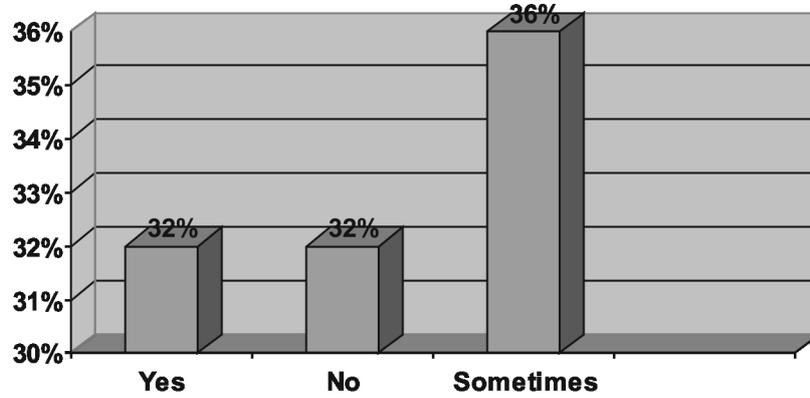
**Graphic 1.** Distribution of representatives who informed about drug promotion.



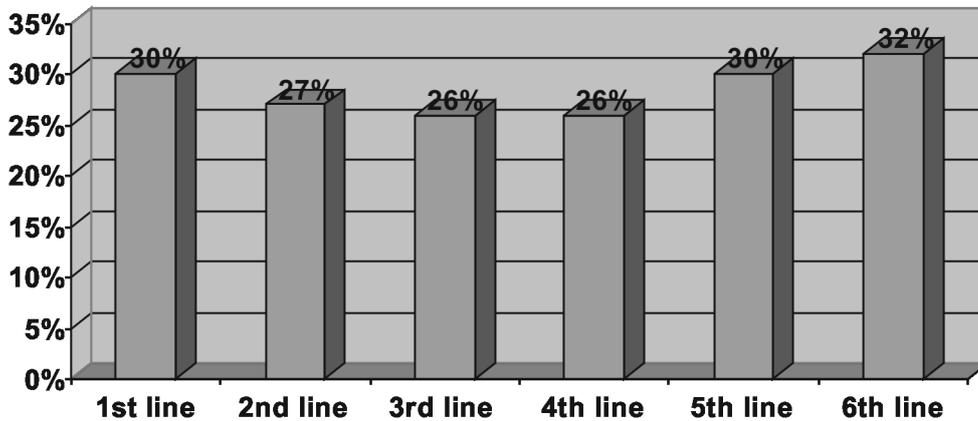
**Graphic 2.** Thoughts of representatives about the liability of information given to them about promotion.



**Graphic 3.** The satisfaction ratio of representatives from the promotion strategies of their firm

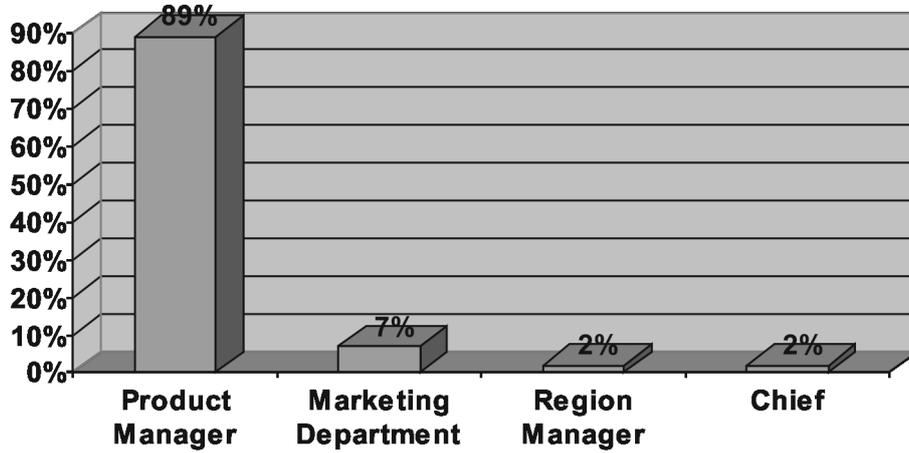


**Graphic 4.** The thoughts of representatives about the promotion strategy of their firm

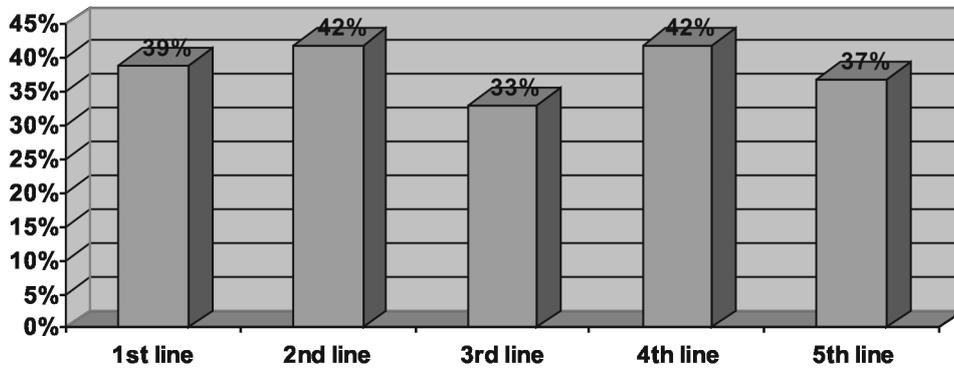


- 1<sup>st</sup> line : Disparity of Central Strategies
- 2<sup>nd</sup> line : Insufficient Marketing Power
- 3<sup>rd</sup> line : Insufficient Education about Product
- 4<sup>th</sup> line : Insufficient Budget
- 5<sup>th</sup> line : Insufficient Reminding Material
- 6<sup>th</sup> line : Insufficient Reminding Material and Sample

**Graphic 5.** Distribution of the people who gives the first information to representatives about the promotion.

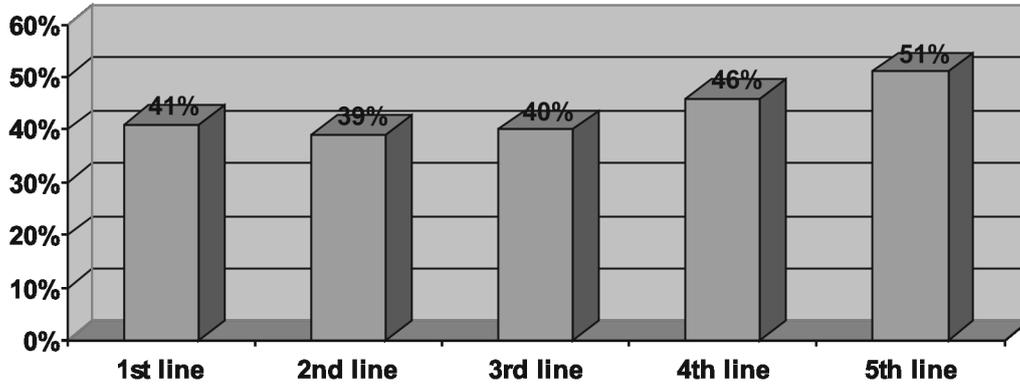


**Graphic 6.** Distribution of the basic subjects during promotion which representatives take care



- 1<sup>st</sup> line* : Effect Mechanism (Effect, side effect etc.)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> line* : Benefits to patient and doctor. (Most effective, easy usage)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> line* : Comparison with rival products and differentiation
- 4<sup>th</sup> line* : Suitable Price (Prompt and suitability of price)
- 5<sup>th</sup> line* : Performing the promotion within the ethic criteria

**Graphic 7.** General evaluation of the information given by representatives during promotion



*1<sup>st</sup> line* : Effect Mechanism (Effect, side effect etc.)

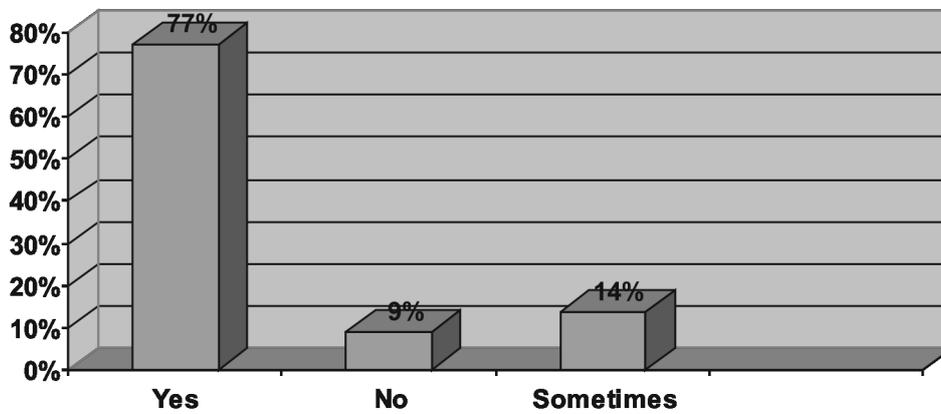
*2<sup>nd</sup> line* : Benefits to patient and doctor. (Most effective, Easy usage)

*3<sup>rd</sup> line* : Comparison with rival products and differentiation

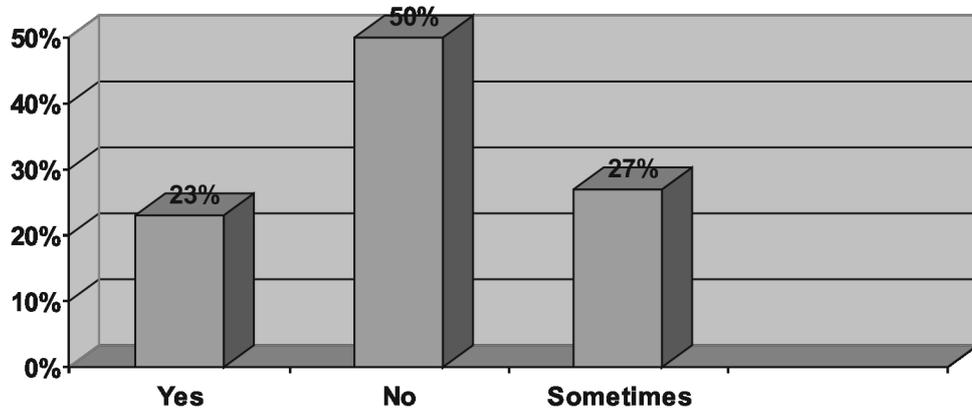
*4<sup>th</sup> line* : Suitable Price (Prompt and Suitability of Price)

*5<sup>th</sup> line* : Reminding Materials

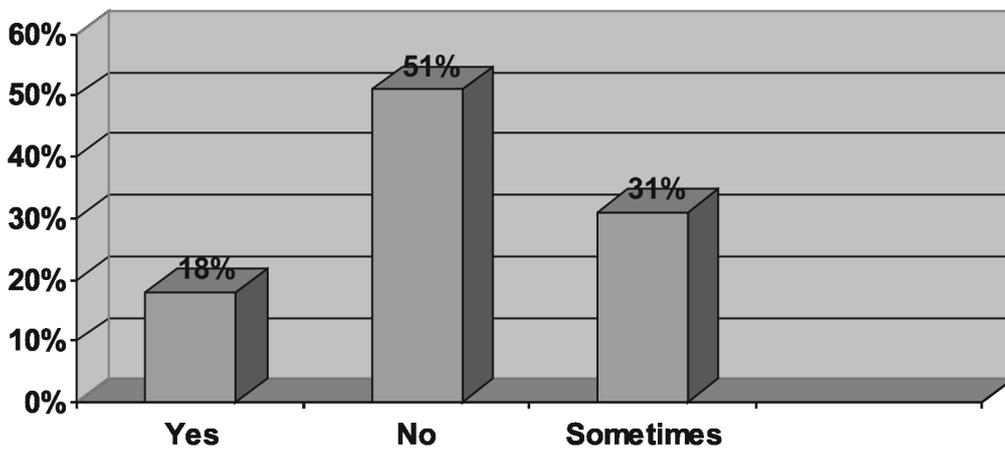
**Graphic 8.** Distribution of the thoughts of representatives about the promotion products as a reminding material



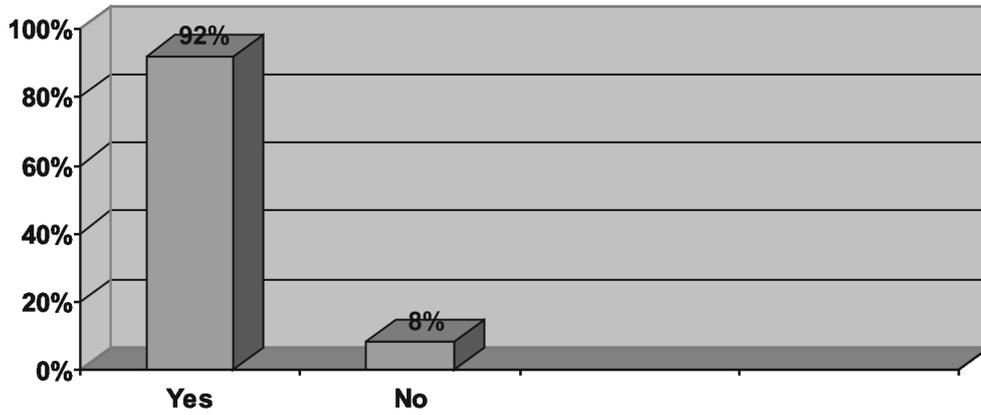
**Graphic 9.** Distribution of the situation whatever the representatives ideas are taken under care while determining the promotion strategies.



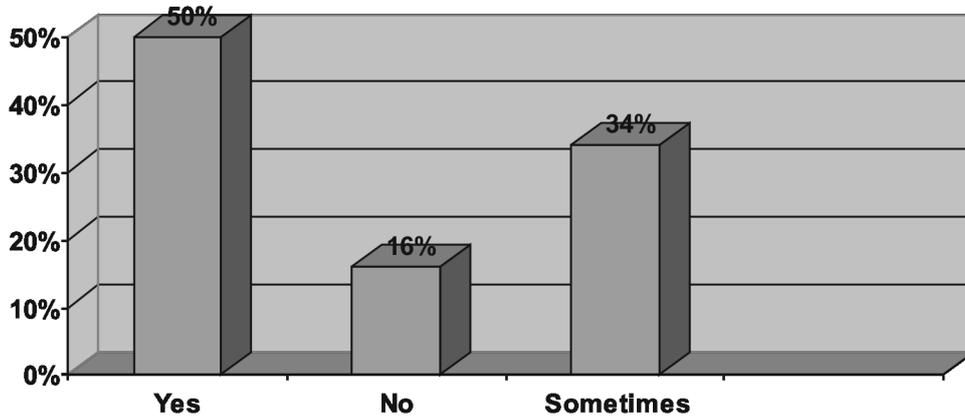
**Graphic 10.** Distribution of the situation whatever the representatives ideas are taken under care while determining the promotion materials.



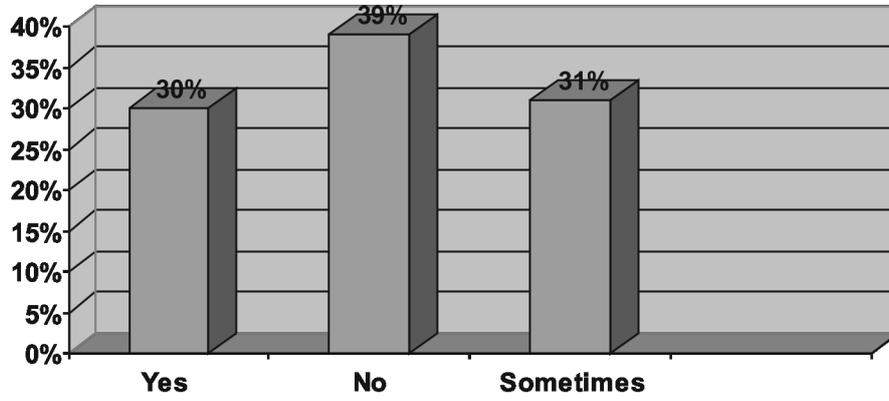
**Graphic 11.** Distribution of the firms whatever representatives have a slogan about promotion.



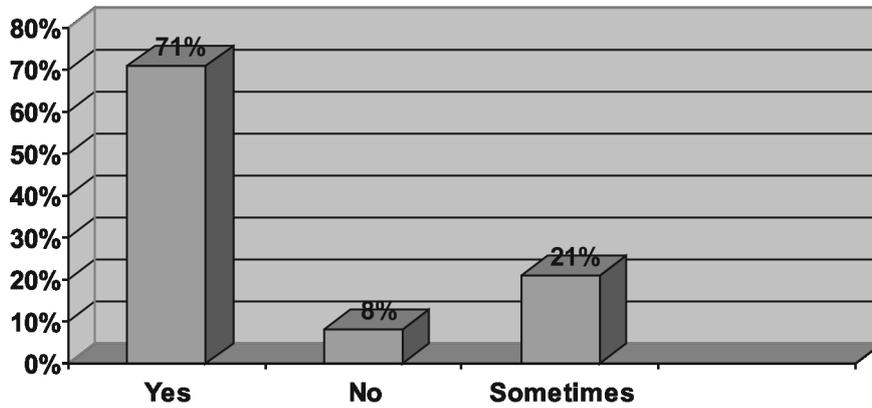
**Graphic 12.** Distribution of whether the representatives have the effective usage of the visual materials (brochure, poster, card etc.) or not during promotion



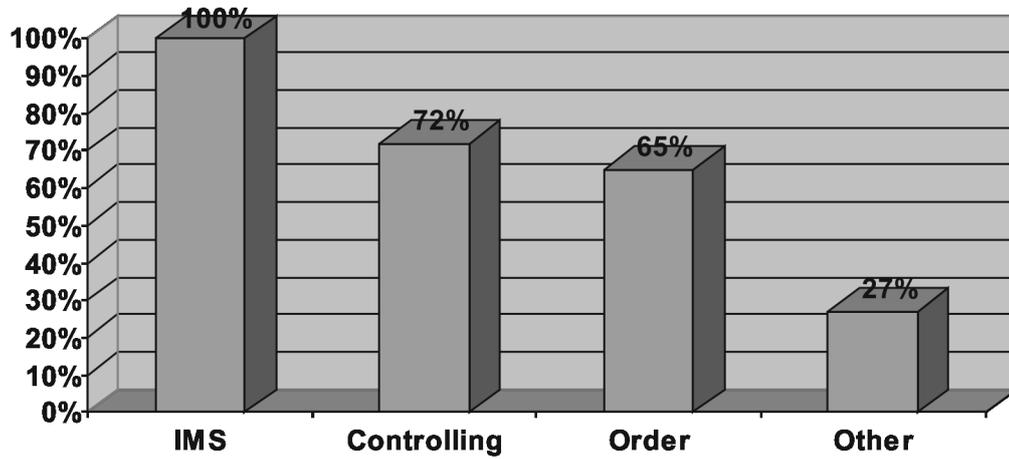
**Graphic 13.** Distribution of representatives thoughts about detailing during promotion.



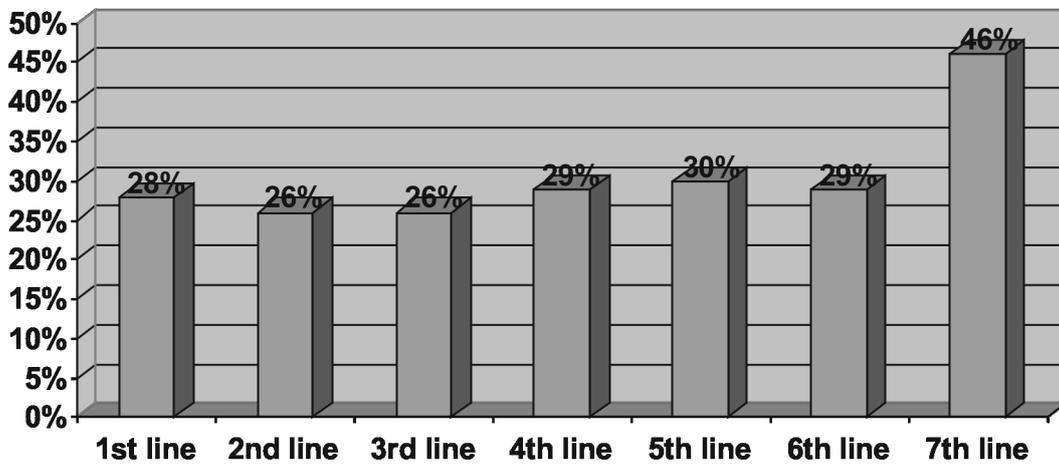
**Graphic 14.** Distribution of the Analyze ability of representatives for the doctor's prescription tendency.



**Graphic 15.** Distribution of representatives technique for analyzing the doctor's prescription tendency.



**Graphic 16.** Distribution of representatives' thoughts about doctor's prescription tendency.



1<sup>st</sup> line : Good bilateral relations

2<sup>nd</sup> line : Likes the drug

3<sup>rd</sup> line : Taking the paramedical

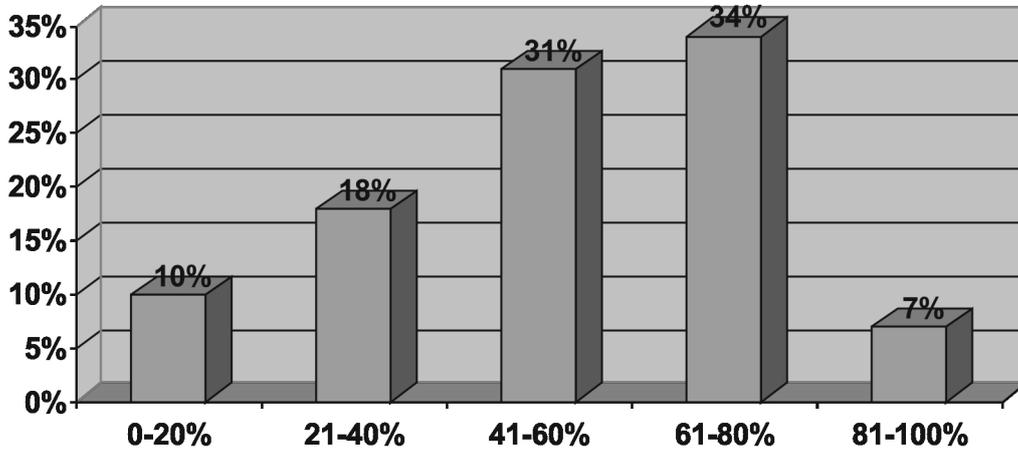
4<sup>th</sup> line : Habits

5<sup>th</sup> line : Activity of drug

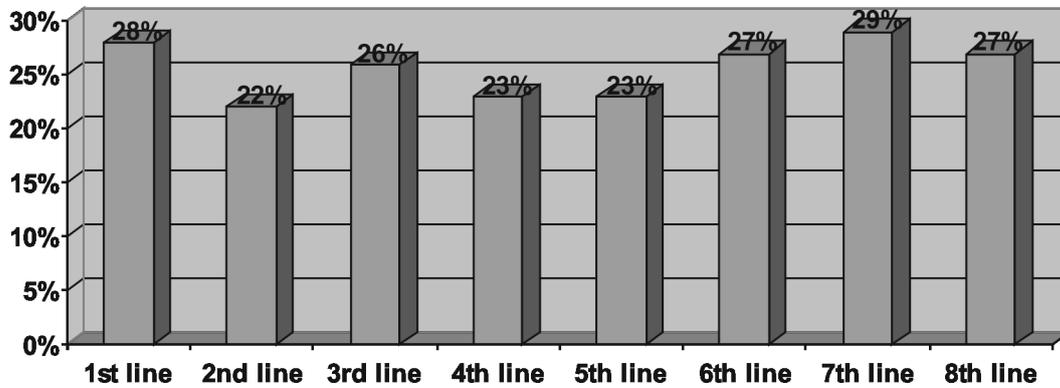
6<sup>th</sup> line : Frequently visit

7<sup>th</sup> line : No equivalent drug work

**Graphic 17.** Distribution of representatives thoughts about sales increase of product which is promoted intensively



**Graphic 18.** Distribution of the representatives thoughts about the criteria of failure against dense promotion



*1<sup>st</sup> line* : Inactivity of drug

*2<sup>nd</sup> line* : Rival activities

*3<sup>rd</sup> line* : Wrong targeting

*4<sup>th</sup> line* : Insufficient paramedical work

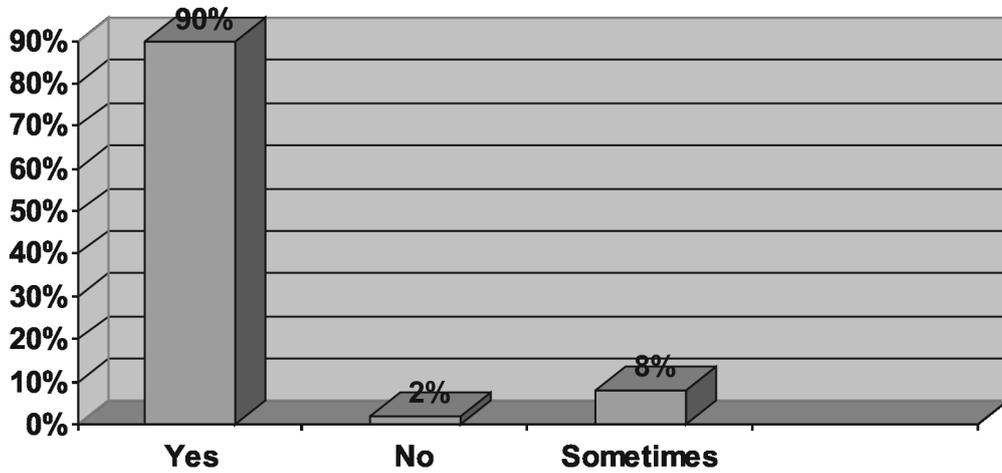
*5<sup>th</sup> line* : Represent factor

*6<sup>th</sup> line* : Doctor's habit

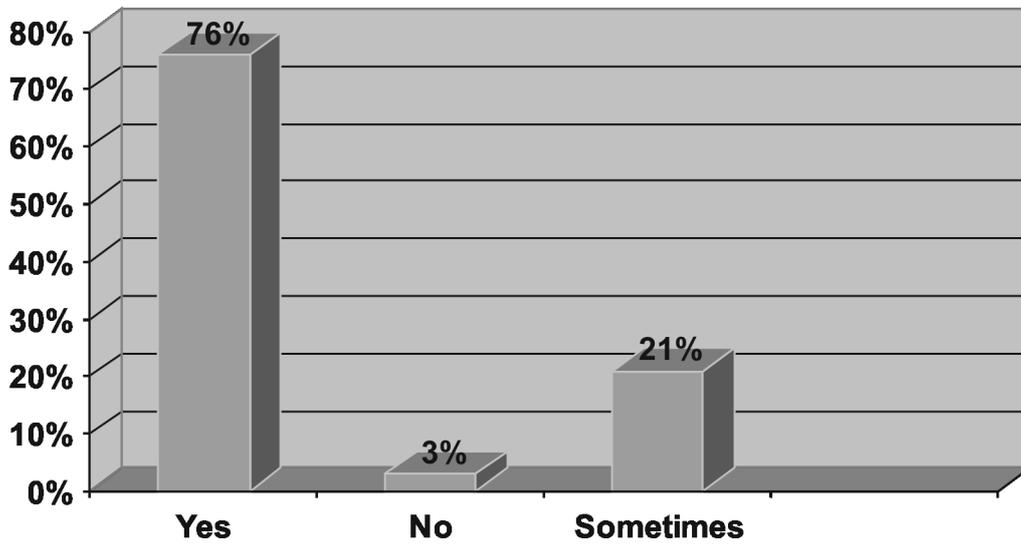
*7<sup>th</sup> line* : Insufficient promotion

*8<sup>th</sup> line* : Maturity of drug

**Graphic 19.** Distribution of situation if representatives try to persuade doctors or pharmacists who have bad thoughts about products.



**Graphic 20.** Distribution of the situation if the representatives take feed back about the promotion they do.



## **Discussion and Conclusion**

94% of the medical representatives who replied the questionnaire, were taken information about promotion, 6% of them were not taken any information. However 68% of them indicated that this was an insufficient information (Graphic 1-2). This shows that most of the education departments of drug firms are insufficient or have wrong strategies.

68% of medical representatives indicated that the promotion strategy of their firms are insufficient (Graphic 3). When the causes of insufficiency was analyzed, it was seen that the 'regional disparity of central strategies' in the first line. 'Insufficient marketing power' in the 2<sup>nd</sup> line. 'Insufficient product education' in the 3<sup>rd</sup> line. 'Insufficient budget' in the 4<sup>th</sup> line, 'insufficient reminding material' (promotion) in the 5<sup>th</sup> line and 'insufficient promotional material and sample' in the 6<sup>th</sup> line (Graphic 4).

89% of representatives indicated that, first information about product was given by product managers or education department (Graphic 5). Almost 90% of firms have product managers or education department and the education given by them is considered insufficient by representatives shows that the liability of these must be examined. Also the insufficient period and contents of education programs must be revised and the education period is short. The firms declared that they have a training program with less than 3 months for inexperienced representatives (7). It is thought provoking that how the inexperienced representatives will apply their work with less than 3 months training .

When the evaluation of basic subjects that representatives take care during promotion was analyzed, it was seen that the 'effect mechanism' is in 1<sup>st</sup> line, 'benefits of patients and doctors' in 2<sup>nd</sup> line, 'comparison with rival and occurring differentiation' in 3<sup>rd</sup> line, 'suitable prices' in 4<sup>th</sup> line and 'acting the principle of ethics promotion' was in 5<sup>th</sup> line (Graphic 6).

When the information that were given by representatives was analyzed, it was seen that; 'benefits of patient and doctor' is in 1<sup>st</sup> line, 'effect mechanism' in 2<sup>nd</sup> line, 'comparison with rival products and occurring differentiation' in 3<sup>rd</sup> line, 'suitable prices' in 4<sup>th</sup> line and 'reminding material' was in 5<sup>th</sup> line (Graphic 7).

77% of representatives thought that promotional products are reminding materials, 9% of them have disagreement about that, and 14% of them thought that this was often happening (Graphic 8). According to this data it can be concluded that promotional products were used suitable for their usage aims.

Most of the representatives (77%) declared that their opinions were not taken while the promotion strategies were built up by their firms (Graphic 9). This evaluation is the evidential data for considering the central strategies were insufficient.

51% of representatives declared that their ideas were not considered as useful while selecting the reminding materials by firms. 18% of representatives ideas were taken usually and 31% of representatives ideas were taken sometimes (Graphic 10).

92% of representatives said that they had slogans for promotion (Graphic 11).

84% of representatives declared that they use the visual materials effectively during promotion (Graphic 12).

Thoughts of representatives about detailing; 30% were positive, 39% were negative and 31% were sometimes positive (Graphic 13).

71% of representatives could analyze the prescription tendency of doctors, 8% of them could not, and 21% of them were sometimes able to analyze it (Graphic 14).

100% of representatives analyze this tendency by following the IMS (Informational Medical Statistics) data, 72% of them by analyzing and controlling the prescription, 65% of them by taking order from pharmacies and 27% of them by using other methods (Graphic 15).

If representatives thoughts were analyzed about the doctors prescription tendencies, it was seen that, 'bilateral relations' take part in 1<sup>st</sup> line with 28%, 'likes the drug' in 2<sup>nd</sup> line with 26%, 'taking paramedical work' in 3<sup>rd</sup> line with 26%, 'habits' in 4<sup>th</sup> line with 29%, 'the activity of drug' is in 5<sup>th</sup> line with 30%, 'frequent visits' in 6<sup>th</sup> line with 29%, and 'no equivalent drug' take part in 7<sup>th</sup> line with the highest ratio (46%) (Graphic 16).

Most of the representatives thought that the IMS data could be changed with promotional activities. Most of them declared that this difference may be in 41-80% value (Graphic 17).

When the information of representatives thoughts about the criteria of failure against dense promotion were analyzed, it was seen that 'inactivity of drug' took part in 1<sup>st</sup> line with 28%, 'rival activities' in 2<sup>nd</sup> line with 22%, 'wrong targeting' in 3<sup>rd</sup> line with 26%, 'insufficient paramedical work' in 4<sup>th</sup> line with 23%, 'representative factor' in 5<sup>th</sup> line

with 23%, ‘doctors’ habit’ in 6<sup>th</sup> line with 27%, ‘insufficient promotion’ in 7<sup>th</sup> line with 29%, the ‘maturity of drug’ was in 8<sup>th</sup> line with 27% (Graphic 18).

98% of representatives tried to persuade doctors and pharmacists who have negative opinions during promotion (Graphic 19).

76% of representatives took feed back, 3% of them did not and 21% of them sometimes took feedback (Graphic 20).

As a conclusion, we can summarize the results which are given below, under the light of this study:

- Drug firms inform representatives about promotion.
- However according to the representatives the education is insufficient.
- 68% of representatives think their firms’ promotion strategies are insufficient.
- Drug firms have department of education or a responsible department for education. But these departments are not sufficient.
- There are some differences in application and basic subjects of promotion for representatives.
- The promotion strategies do not satisfy the representatives.
- Representatives believe that promotion products are reminding materials.
- Firms have slogans for products which are in their wallet.
- Representatives believe that visual materials must be used effectively during promotion and they can use them effectively during promotion.
- Representatives do not believe that detailing is important.
- They can analyze the doctors’ tendency.
- They follow these tendencies by following IMS data, prescription control and taking order from pharmacies.
- They think doctors’ prescription tendencies have different reason.
- They think the values of IMS can be changed by promotional works.
- According to the representatives, in spite of intense promotional activities the failure shows difference. Representatives try to persuade the doctors who have negative opinions about the drugs during promotion. They use different methods for this. But the liability and ethics of these methods must be discussed.
- Representatives take feed-back about promotion.

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