

# Comparison of Medical Information Services Offered by Branded Versus Generic Pharmaceutical Companies

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## Introduction

Branded pharmaceutical companies have played a key role in providing innovative medications. Many patients and healthcare professionals switch to generic products after patent expiration. Although the perception is that branded pharmaceutical companies offer a higher level of medical information services, to our knowledge, no studies have systematically compared the level of service of branded and generic pharmaceutical companies.

## Objectives

- To assess the quality and variety of medical information services offered by branded and generic pharmaceutical companies.
- To provide a benchmarking analysis for pharmaceutical companies to rank their services among the top branded and generic pharmaceutical companies.

## Materials & Methods

- A phone survey was developed and conducted to assess both the quality and quantity of services offered by branded and generic pharmaceutical companies. Phone calls were made to each of the companies by both consumers and health care practitioners. Companies included in the survey were identified as the top branded and generic pharmaceutical companies based on sales and included:

Branded	Generic
AstraZeneca	Apotex
Bristol-Myers Squibb	Dr. Reddy's Laboratories
Eli Lilly and Co.	King Pharmaceuticals
GlaxoSmithKline	Mylan Pharmaceuticals
Hoffmann-La Roche	Par Pharmaceutical
Ortho-McNeil Janssen	Prasco
Merck & Co.	Rainbow Pharmaceuticals
Novartis	Sandoz
Pfizer	Teva Pharmaceuticals
sanofi aventis	Watson Laboratories

- Companies were evaluated based on a variety of different measures. Both quantity and quality of services were evaluated. The quantity was based on the number of services offered and quality was based on the overall level of service score. This score was calculated by allocating points for the various services offered, with companies that offered a larger variety of services receiving higher scores. Assessed services included:

- Hours of operation
- Number of transfers
- After-hours coverage
- Written responses and materials
- Professional websites
- Response time
- Translation services

## Results

Figure 1: Regular Hours of Operation

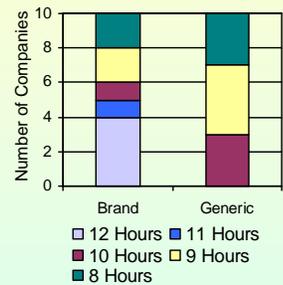


Figure 2: Written Follow-up Documents

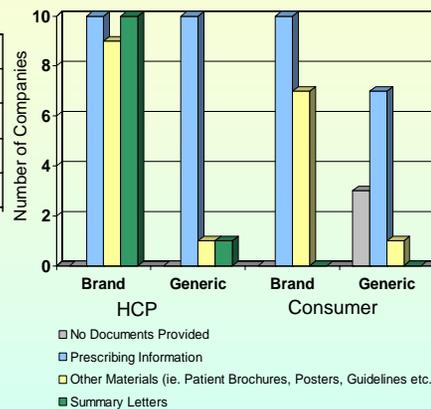
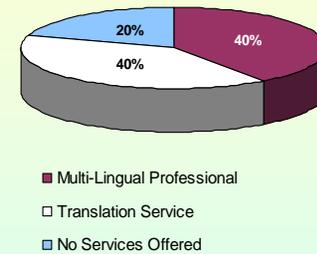


Figure 3: Language Services Offered by Branded Pharmaceutical Companies for Verbal Inquiries\*



\*No generic companies offered translation services for verbal inquiries

Figure 4: After Hours Coverage

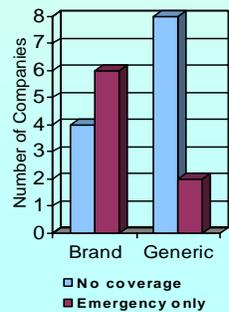


Figure 5: Response Time

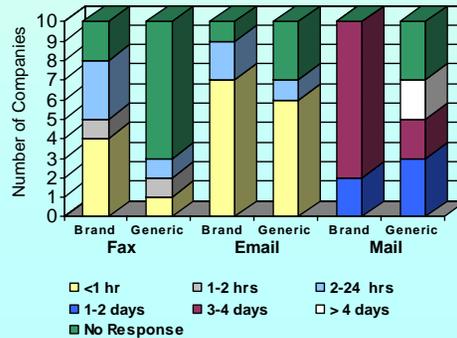
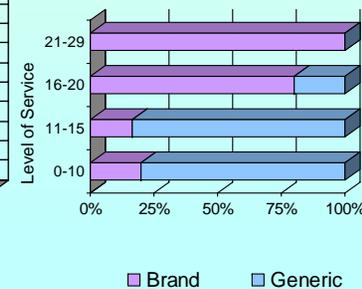


Figure 6: Overall Level of Medical Information Services



## Results Continued

- HCPs respond to verbal inquiries from consumers: 50% of generic companies vs. 70% of branded companies
- HCPs respond to verbal inquiries from HCPs: 70% of generic companies vs. 100% of branded companies
- HCPs access to medical information letters on the web: 10% of generic companies vs. 60% of branded companies
- Average number of transfers to reach medical information: 3.2 with generic companies vs. 3.5 with branded companies
- Medical information center located at their corporate office: 20% of generic companies vs. 50% of branded companies
- Overall level of service score: 11.5 for generic companies vs. 18.4 for branded companies

## Discussion

Overall, branded pharmaceutical companies offered longer hours of service (averaging 10.3 hours of service per day), as well as 60% offering emergency coverage. Branded companies also offered a wider variety of services including translating services, literature request services and access to medical information letters on websites, which were rarely offered by the generic manufacturers. In regards to response time, branded and generic companies had similar email times; however branded companies had faster fax times and generic companies had faster mail times. Generic companies had a higher non-response rate for faxes and most generic companies did not have medical information letters available.

## Limitations

One limitation of this survey was that customer satisfaction was not measured against services offered. In addition, the benchmarking tool utilized to evaluate the companies surveyed has not been validated. However, the analysis presented offers a reference point for corporate medical information departments to evaluate and benchmark their services.

## Conclusion

Based on an analysis of all services offered, branded pharmaceutical companies offer a larger variety of medical information services. Using the information provided, pharmaceutical companies can score their medical information services and rank themselves among the top pharmaceutical companies.

## Acknowledgements

Karen Cohen, PharmD, Mark Faust, RPh, Lucy Jiang, PharmD