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Impact of regulation on advertising and promotion of traditional herbal medicines and food supplements

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Abstract

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to show that advertising as part of product promotion is in strict correlation with the specific regulation of each product category, food supplements and herbal/over-the-counter medicines. Main contributions of the paper are two-fold. First, it demonstrates that there are products when certain botanical is registered according to legislation as herbal medicine, but at the same time it can be found in sales as food supplement. This can happen within the same country, but it is more frequent within different countries. Second, the possibility for regulation harmonization is discussed.

Design/methodology/approach

In this paper, a comparative analysis of regulation for concerned products in European Union and countries of interest is made. In two case studies, a comparative analysis of marketing of the products in Macedonia and Serbia is made.

Findings

Food supplements are subject to more liberal regulation in comparison with herbal/over-the-counter medicines, but should not be attributed indications and properties that they do not possess. Regulation is stricter and more complex for over-the-counter medicines as a separate class of medicines, these must be correlated with registered properties and indications and are subject to approval by regulatory bodies (print media: advertisement in newspaper/magazine, poster, brochure, flyer, banner and billboard and electronic media: TV spot, radio advertising and internet advertisement).

Research limitations/implications

Countries of interest: EU, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Practical implications

The paper will contribute toward the creation of promotional and marketing steps in placement of these products on the market in countries of interest, based on regulation of the product category.

Social implications

The discussed opportunities for harmonization are applicable and realistic and can positively contribute for better flow and placement of food supplements and herbal/over-the-counter medicines in different countries. The results of the case studies can also be used for regulatory activities and preparation of marketing materials for other products on other markets of interest with same or similar regulation.

Originality/value

For the first time, a comparative analysis of regulation is made for concerned products in countries of interest. Possibility for regulation harmonization is discussed.

Keywords

[Advertising](#)[Regulation](#)[Promotion](#)[Food supplements](#)[Traditional herbal medicines](#)

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