



Wholesale And Retail Pharmacy Market Structure And Performance

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ABSTRACT :

High lighting the influence of economies of scale and strategic partnerships on competitive This paper explores the structure and performance of the wholesale and retail pharmacy market, focusing on key dynamics that influence competition, pricing strategies, and service delivery. The examination starts with a comprehensive outline of the market structure, including the roles of wholesalers, independent pharmacies, and chain pharmacies. Factors such as regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, and consumer behaviour are examined to understand their impact on market efficiency and accessibility. We employ a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative case studies to assess performance metrics, including profitability, customer satisfaction, and service quality. Our discoveries uncover critical varieties in performance over.

Different market segments advantage. The study concludes with policy recommendations aimed at enhancing market transparency and promoting equitable access to pharmaceutical services, ultimately contributing to improved health outcomes and consumer welfare. This inquire about gives profitable experiences for partners the pharmacy sector, including policymakers, healthcare providers, and business leaders. The healthcare system, highlighting their functions, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Wholesale pharmacies serve as crucial intermediaries in the pharmaceutical supply chain, ensuring the efficient distribution of medications from manufacturers to retail outlets, hospitals, and healthcare providers. Conversely, retail pharmacies are pivotal in patient care, providing direct access to medications, health consultations, and preventive services. The article explores current trends, including the impact of e-pharmacy, regulatory changes, and the rising importance of personalized medicine. Additionally we discuss the challenges faced by both sectors, such as supply chain disruptions, pricing pressures, and the need for Technological adaptation. Finally, the review emphasizes the potential for collaboration between wholesale and retail pharmacies to enhance service delivery, improve patient outcomes, and ensure sustainable practices.

Keywords-Wholesale and retail pharmacy, market structure

1. Introduction :

The retailing and wholesaling pharmacy industries (Distributive trades sector) represent the intermediate steps in the distribution of merchandise between producers and consumers of goods. Wholesale and retail trade services are crucial to the efficient and effective flow of goods from producer to consumer. Together Discount and retail exchange administrations are pivotal to the productive and compelling stream of products from maker to customer. Together the wholesaling and retailing businesses account for noteworthy parcels of financial yield and worldwide business. Wholesalers act as promoting mediators that not one or the other create nor expend the wrapped up item, but instep offer to retailers, other shippers, and/or to mechanical, organization, and commercial clients. The pharmacy sector plays a crucial role in healthcare systems, acting as a bridge between manufacturers, healthcare providers, and patients.

pharmacies serve distinct yet interconnected functions that are vital for the accessibility and distribution of pharmaceutical products. Wholesale pharmacies primarily focus on the bulk procurement and distribution of medications to retail pharmacies, hospitals, and healthcare facilities. Their operations ensure a consistent supply chain, enabling healthcare providers to access a diverse range of pharmaceutical products efficiently. In contrast, retail pharmacies serve as the primary point of access for consumers, providing not only prescription medications but also over-the-counter drugs, health products, and patient counselling services. This review article aims to explore the intricacies of both wholesale and retail pharmacy sectors, examining their operational frameworks, regulatory environments, and the evolving challenges they face in a rapidly changing healthcare landscape. With the increasing emphasis on patientcentered care, understanding the dynamics between wholesale and retail pharmacies is essential for enhancing service delivery and improving health outcomes.

2. Layout of Retail of Pharmacy :

A great format comes about in comforts comfort, appearance security and benefits. Plant or shop drug store format implies “It indisguishably includes the allotment of space and the equipment's and stock of solutions in such a way that in general working costs.

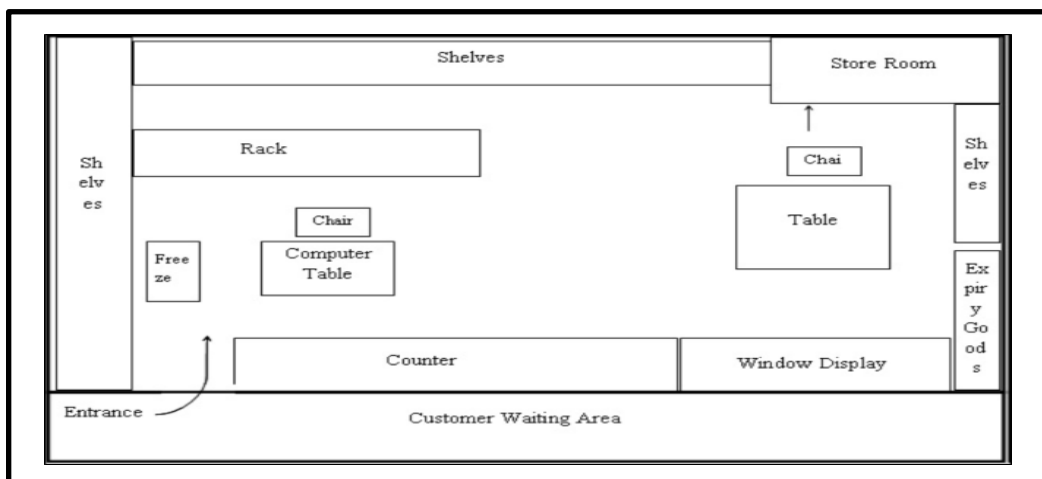


Fig.1 Layout of retail pharmacy.

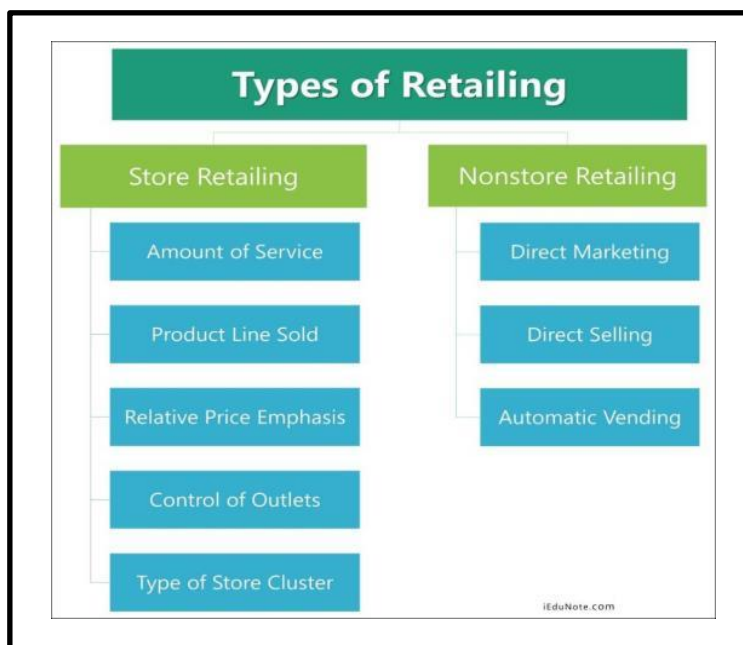


Fig.2 Types of retailing

Pharmacy retailing encompasses various types that cater to different needs and markets. Community pharmacies are typically independent or chain stores located in neighbourhoods, offering prescription medications and health consultations. Chain pharmacies, like CVS and Walgreens, provide a wide array of pharmaceutical services across multiple locations, often incorporating in-store clinics. Specialty pharmacies focus on high-cost medications for complex conditions, delivering tailored services and support. Mail-order pharmacies enable patients to receive their prescriptions at home, facilitating.

3. Locating Product onto Their Labelled Product :

Pharmaceutical naming alludes to the method of including names to pharmaceutical items to encourage distinguishing proof and understanding of vital data for end-users. There are Three major types of labels that companies and small businesses are using for their products and operations Brand labels This label includes information about the product's brand and its parent brand. It passes on the brand title, trademark, symbol, brand message, etc. Graphic Name This name incorporates product-related data like fixings, utilization data, care, execution, etc. Grade labels Marketing Essentials Chapter 31, Section 31.2 The brand label gives the brand name, trademark, or logo Locating products onto their labelled containers in a pharmacy is a systematic process that ensures accuracy and patient safety. It begins with receiving and checking deliveries to verify that the shipment matches the order in terms of quantity and expiration dates. Each product is then labelled clearly, displaying essential information such as the product name, dosage form, strength, and storage instructions. Organizing products effectively—often by therapeutic class or alphabetical order—facilitates easy access. Implementing the "first in, first out" (FIFO) method helps manage stock rotation, minimizing waste from expired medications. Utilizing inventory management systems enhances tracking and retrieval efficiency, while regular audits maintain accurate records of stock levels. Finally, training pharmacy staff on the layout

and labelling importance is crucial for ensuring quick and reliable access to products, ultimately prioritizing patient safety. Staff members are trained to familiarize themselves with the pharmacy's layout and the labelling system to ensure quick access to products. Furthermore, pharmacies often implement barcoding systems.

4. Reading the Prescription for Records in Medical :

Originating before cutting edge legitimate definitions of a medicine, a medicine customarily is composed of four parts a superscription, engraving, membership, and signature. The superscription segment contains the date of the medicine and quiet data (title, address, age, etc.). Title, capability, address and enlistment number of the specialist. Name, age and gender of the patient. Date of consultation. Name of the Medication prescribed. Directions for use including dosage, frequency and duration Reading prescriptions accurately is vital not only for proper medication dispensing but also for maintaining thorough medical records, which can aid in future healthcare decisions and patient management. Training in recognizing and interpreting these components is essential for pharmacy staff.

5. Review of Medication and Patient History :

Patient Medication History Interview a medication history is a detailed, accurate and complete account of all prescribed and nonprescribed medications that a patient had taken or is currently taking prior to a newly initiated institutionalized or ambulatory care. Understanding a patient's medication history and comprehensive medical history is crucial for effective healthcare delivery. This review examines the importance of medication and patient history in clinical practice, including its role in ensuring safe prescribing, improving treatment outcomes, and facilitating effective communication among healthcare providers. Additionally, we explore methods for gathering and maintaining accurate patient histories and discuss the implications for patient safety and care quality. Medication history refers to the detailed record of all medications a patient has taken, including prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, supplements, and herbal remedies. This history is essential for clinicians to make informed decisions regarding current and future treatments. Comprehensive patient history encompasses not only medication but also previous medical conditions, allergies, and family health history. Collectively, these elements are vital for minimizing adverse drug interactions, optimizing therapeutic outcomes, and enhancing overall patient safety. Preventing Adverse Drug Reactions (ADRs) a thorough medication history allows healthcare providers to identify potential drug interactions and contraindications. By understanding a patient's past medication use, providers can tailor prescriptions to avoid harmful effects. Informed Decision-Making Access to complete medication histories enables clinicians to make evidence-based decisions regarding treatment plans. This knowledge is particularly important in cases involving polypharmacy, where patients may be taking multiple medications.

6. Medication Error :

While there is no uniform definition of a medication error, The National Coordinating Council for Medication Error Reporting and Prevention defines a medication error as "any preventable event that may cause or lead to improper medicine utilize or understanding hurt whereas the pharmaceutical is within the control of the healthcare proficient, understanding, or buyer. Such occasions may be related to proficient hone, wellbeing care items, strategies, and frameworks, counting endorsing; arrange communication; item naming, bundling, and classification; compounding; apportioning; conveyance; organization; instruction; monitoring; and use." Be that because it may, there's no broadly recognized uniform definition. Shockingly, untoward therapeutic blunders and underreported medicine blunders result in noteworthy dreariness and mortality. Medication errors are significant incidents in healthcare that can compromise patient safety and treatment efficacy. These errors may occur at various stages of the medication process, including prescribing, dispensing, administering, and monitoring. Understanding the types, causes, and consequences of medication errors is essential for developing strategies to minimize their occurrence and enhance patient safety.

7. Types of Medication Errors Prescribing Errors :

Involves mistakes made by healthcare providers during the medication prescribing process. Common examples include incorrect drug selection, inappropriate dosage, and overlooking patient allergies or drug interactions.

7.1 Dispensing Errors

Occur when pharmacists or pharmacy technicians make mistakes while preparing or dispensing medications. This can involve giving the wrong medication, incorrect dosage forms, or labelling errors.

7.2 Administration Errors

Happen during the actual delivery of the medication to the patient. Examples include administering the wrong dose, wrong route

7.3 Monitoring Errors

Involve inadequate monitoring of a patient's response to medication therapy. This may include failing to check for side effects or not adjusting dosages based on therapeutic response.

7.4 Causes of Medication Errors Communication Issues

Poor communication among healthcare providers, or between providers and patients, can lead to misunderstandings, regarding medication orders and instructions.

7.5 Systemic Factors

Complex healthcare systems, including inadequate staffing, high workloads, and lack of standardized procedures, contribute to an increased risk of errors.

7.6 Human Factors

Cognitive overload, distractions, and fatigue among healthcare professionals can lead to lapses in attention and judgment. Prescribing multiple medications that serve the same purpose, leading to an overdose or unnecessary polypharmacy.

7.7 Technological Limitations

While technology can enhance safety, it can also introduce errors if systems are poorly designed or if there is insufficient training. Pharmacies in rural or underdeveloped areas may face challenges accessing modern technological tools and resources, leading to inefficiencies in inventory management, customer service, and overall operations

8. Retail Pharmacy Market Background and Available Data :

Overview of Prescription Filling Channels Retail Pharmacies and Mail- Order Pharmacies

Patients in the United States have two main channels through which they can fill their prescriptions for pharmaceutical products local retail "brick-and-mortar" pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies. Both channels serve essential roles in the healthcare system, but they differ significantly in terms of patient experience, cost structures, and convenience.

Local Retail Pharmacies (Brick-and-Mortar Pharmacies)

Local retail pharmacies are physical stores that dispense prescription medications and often provide a wide range of other services, including over-the-counter (OTC) products, immunizations, health screenings, and consultations with pharmacists.

Types of Retail Pharmacies:

- **Independent Pharmacies:** These are pharmacies operated by small, locally owned businesses. According to the FDA (2001), independent pharmacies are defined as those with three or fewer stores.
- **Chain Pharmacies:** Chain pharmacies are larger, corporate-owned pharmacies that operate multiple locations (four or more stores). They can be further classified as Stand-alone retail pharmacies located within department stores or grocery stores.
- **Independent vs. Chain:** Independent pharmacies generally provide a more personalized level of service and are often favoured by customers who value individualized care (e.g., custom medication counselling, better familiarity with patient history). However, independent pharmacies tend to have lower prescription volumes and smaller sales of non-prescription items compared to chain pharmacies, leading to higher operating costs per prescription (Carroll, Meyerhof, and Waters, 1996).
- **Chain Pharmacies:** Large chains such as CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid offer high prescription volumes and generally have greater access to various over-the-counter products. While chain pharmacies tend to have greater efficiency in filling prescriptions and broader product selections, they may not offer the same personalized service as independent pharmacies.

9. Market Evolution :

The landscape of retail pharmacies in the U.S. has changed significantly over time. For example:

- **1994:** The NCPDP database reported 56,595 retail pharmacies, of which 25,808 were independent and 30,787 were chain-affiliated.
- **2002:** The number of retail pharmacies remained consistent at 55,851, but the composition shifted to 20,051 independent pharmacies and 33,625 chain-affiliated pharmacies.
- **Growth of Grocery and Department Store Pharmacies:** The number of pharmacies located within grocery stores increased by 79%, and those within department stores increased by 57% between 1992 and 2002 (Fraher et al., 2005). This reflects a trend toward retail diversification and greater convenience for customers.
- **Customer Preferences:** According to a 1999 Consumer Reports survey, customers generally prefer the service they receive at independent pharmacies. However, independent pharmacies face operational challenges, such as lower prescription volumes and higher perprescription costs due to smaller sales of non-prescription items (Stratton,2001).

10. Mail-Order Pharmacies :

Mail-order pharmacies primarily cater to patients who need to fill long-term prescriptions, often for chronic conditions, or for those covered by third-party payers (e.g., insurance providers or health

11. ADVANTAGES :

- **Convenience:** Patients can receive their prescriptions without having to leave their homes, which is particularly beneficial for those with mobility issues or who live in remote areas.
- **Cost Savings:** Mail-order pharmacies often offer lower drug prices and may be a more affordable option for patients with on going medication needs, due to bulk dispensing and lower operational costs compared to brick-and-mortar pharmacies.
- **Medication Synchronization:** For patients with multiple chronic conditions, mail-order pharmacies can synchronize refills, ensuring that all medications arrive at the same time, which helps with adherence to treatment regimens.

Challenges:

- **Lack of Immediate Access:** Unlike local retail pharmacies, which provide immediate access to medications, mail-order pharmacies require a waiting period for delivery, which may not be suitable in urgent or emergency situations.
- **Complex Regulations:** Both wholesale and retail pharmacy markets are heavily regulated. These regulations include compliance with

11.Database Management: National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) :

The National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) plays a key role in maintaining the database of active retail pharmacies in the U.S. This database contains significant data, such as:

- Pharmacy Addresses
- Unique Pharmacy Identification Numbers (PINs)
- Retail pharmacies have a strong incentive to keep their information up to date in the NCPDP database, as the data is used by government agencies, third-party payers, and healthcare providers to ensure the accurate dispensing of prescriptions and proper reimbursement. The NCPDP database classifies pharmacies as either independent or chain-affiliated and further distinguishes between stand-alone retail pharmacies and those affiliated with department stores or grocery stores. This classification helps healthcare professionals and insurers.

12. Implications :

- **Economic and Market Effects:** The shift toward mail-order pharmacies, driven by PBMs, may lead to lower prescription costs but could also reduce the quality of patient care, given the reduced interaction with healthcare providers. This raises important questions about balancing cost savings with patient outcomes.
- **Retail Pharmacy Response:** Retail pharmacies may need to adapt to the increasing prominence of mail-order pharmacies. They might need to compete on price, improve service offerings, or leverage patient-provider relationships more effectively to differentiate themselves.
- **Data and Research Needs:** More research is needed to understand the full impact of mail-order pharmacies on regional pharmacy markets, especially in terms of patient outcomes, prescription pricing, and service quality. Better access to relevant data could help researchers and policymakers navigate these issues. Would you like more details on any of these aspects, or is there a specific area you would like to explore further. The working of a wholesale pharmacy involves the purchase, storage, and distribution of pharmaceutical products and medical supplies from manufacturer's to various healthcare providers such as retail pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare institutions.
- **Price Control and Regulation:** Governments often regulate pharmaceutical pricing, especially for essential drugs. The level of regulation in both wholesale and retail markets can determine the affordability of drugs. Policies like price caps, reimbursement systems (e.g., Medicaid/Medicare), and competition laws shape the performance of the market.
- **Patient Retention:** Pharmacies that are known to make prescribing errors may struggle to retain customers, which can directly impact market share. Customers may prefer competitors with a more reliable track record.
- **Healthcare System Strain:** When prescribing errors lead to hospitalizations or additional treatments, the broader healthcare system faces increased strain, including longer wait times, overcrowded emergency rooms, and higher healthcare costs.
- **Increased Workload for Pharmacy Staff:** When prescribing errors are identified, pharmacy staff must take time to rectify the mistake, contact the healthcare provider, and inform the patient. This increases the workload of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and other personnel, leading to delays in service delivery.

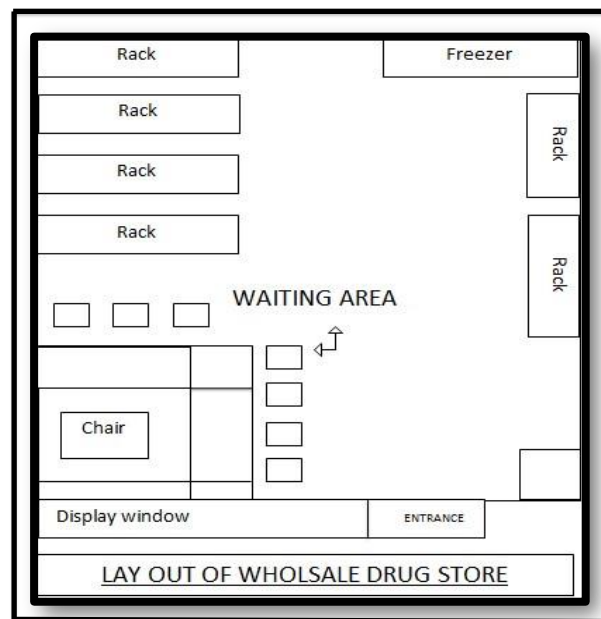


Fig.3 layout of wholesale pharmacy

13. Procurement and Sourcing

- **Bulk Purchasing:** Wholesale pharmacies buy large quantities of pharmaceutical products (prescription drugs, over-the-counter medications, and medical supplies) directly from pharmaceutical manufacturers or authorized distributors. This is done at discounted rates due to bulk purchasing.
- **Product Selection:** They typically offer a wide range of pharmaceutical products, from generic medications to branded ones, depending on market demand. The products can include medicines, surgical supplies, diagnostic equipment, and other healthcare-related items.
- **Supply Chain Relationships:** Wholesale pharmacies often establish direct contracts with pharmaceutical companies or may source from other suppliers, depending on the availability and cost-effectiveness.

14. Storage and Inventory Management

- **Warehousing:** Wholesale pharmacies have large warehouses to store their inventory. These warehouses must be equipped to manage temperature-sensitive products (e.g., vaccines, insulin), and maintain proper storage conditions to ensure product efficacy.
- **Inventory Control:** Advanced inventory management systems are used to track stock levels, expiration dates, and ensure the availability of products. These systems help prevent stock outs and manage the rotation of goods efficiently (FIFO – First In, First Out).
- **Regular Audits:** Periodic checks and audits are conducted to ensure accurate stock levels, compliance with safety regulations, and the quality of medications.

15. Order Fulfilment

- **Receiving Orders:** Retail pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare providers place orders for pharmaceutical products. Orders may be placed manually via phone or through automated systems such as an online ordering portal.
- **Processing Orders:** Once the order is received, the wholesale pharmacy picks the items from the warehouse, packages them according to delivery standards, and prepares them for shipment.
- **Delivery:** Wholesale pharmacies use logistics companies to ensure timely delivery to healthcare providers. Depending on agreements, delivery might be same-day, next-day, or based on a regular schedule.

16. Pricing and Mark-up

- **Pricing Strategy:** Wholesale pharmacies buy products at a lower cost due to bulk purchases and sell them at a mark up. This mark-up covers operational costs (warehousing, logistics, staffing, etc.) and generates profit.
- **Flexible Pricing:** Prices can vary depending on the volume of the order, with larger orders often receiving better discounts. Wholesale pharmacies may also offer special rates or discounts to regular clients or long-term contract customers.

17. Regulatory Compliance

- Wholesale pharmacies must comply with regulatory standards set by health authorities such as:
- FDA (Food and Drug Administration) within the U.S for ensuring that pharmaceutical products are safe, effective, and properly labeled.
- DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) for controlled substances.
- Good Distribution Practices (GDP) to ensure products are stored and transported in proper conditions.
- They are responsible for ensuring that the products they distribute are not expired, damaged, or unsafe for use.
- They must also maintain proper records of product movement, including batch numbers and expiry dates, to comply with traceability requirements.

18. Customer Relationship Management :

- **Building Relationships:** Wholesale pharmacies develop strong relationships with healthcare providers (such as pharmacies and hospitals) by offering reliable delivery, excellent customer service, and flexible payment terms.
- **Value-added Services:** These may include customized ordering platforms, credit terms for payments, and assistance with inventory management.
- **Consultation and Education:** Wholesale pharmacies may provide training for healthcare providers on how to use certain medications or manage stock efficiently, especially for high-value or specialty drugs.

19. Technology and Automation :

- Wholesale pharmacies often use **enterprise resource planning (ERP)** systems for managing their operations, which can include inventory management, order processing, accounting, and customer service.
- **Automated Ordering Systems:** Many wholesale pharmacies offer webbased platforms or portals where customers (e.g., pharmacies) can place orders, track shipments, check inventory, and receive notifications for new products.
- **Tracking and Monitoring:** They use barcode scanning and other technology to track products through every stage of the distribution process, ensuring accuracy and efficiency.

20. Payment and Invoicing :

- **Credit and Payment Terms:** Wholesale pharmacies typically extend credit to their clients, which means payment is made after the product is delivered, typically within 30-60 days.
- **Invoicing:** After delivery, the wholesale pharmacy generates an invoice detailing the products purchased, prices, taxes, and payment due date.
- **Accounting Systems:** Payments are tracked, and any outstanding balances are managed through an accounting system.
- **Detailed Invoices:** Wholesalers issue invoices to retailers or pharmacies detailing the products supplied, quantities, and the price.
- **Payment Terms:** The invoice typically includes the payment terms (e.g., Net 30, or discounts for early payment) and due dates.
- **Electronic Invoices:** With the growth of digital tools, wholesalers use electronic invoicing systems, allowing for faster, error-free processing and tracking.

21>Returns and Replacements

- **Return Policy:** Wholesale pharmacies often have a policy for handling returns or exchanges, especially for expired, damaged, or incorrect products. These returns are processed according to health and safety regulations.
- **Product Recall Handling:** If a product is recalled by the manufacturer, wholesale pharmacies must manage the recall by notifying their customers and removing the affected products from circulation.

In summary, wholesale pharmacies serve as essential intermediaries in the healthcare supply chain, ensuring that medicines and medical supplies are delivered efficiently from manufacturers to healthcare providers. Their operations involve managing large inventories, maintaining compliance with regulations, processing orders, offering pricing advantages, and ensuring timely delivery of goods.

Conclusion :

Both local retail pharmacies and mail-order pharmacies offer unique benefits and challenges for patients. While local retail pharmacies provide personalized care and immediate access to medications, mail-order pharmacies cater to patients with long-term medication needs and offer cost savings and convenience. The market continues to evolve, with trends like the expansion of pharmacies within grocery and department stores reshaping the landscape. The NCPDP database plays an essential role in tracking and maintaining accurate information about these pharmacies, helping ensure smooth operations for third-party payers, government agencies, and healthcare providers.

The text you provided highlights several important issues related to the role of mail-order pharmacies and pharmacy-benefit managers (PBMs) in the healthcare system, focusing on their impact on prescription revenue, retail pharmacies, and market competition.

The wholesale and retail pharmacy markets are essential components of the global healthcare system, each playing a distinct role in ensuring the timely and effective distribution of pharmaceutical products. The wholesale market is characterized by large-scale distribution and a few dominant players, while the retail market is diverse, ranging from independent pharmacies to large chains and online platforms. Both markets face a set of unique challenges, from regulatory pressures to supply chain vulnerabilities, but are also experiencing significant opportunities driven by technological advancements, e-commerce growth, and changes in healthcare delivery. The future of these markets will likely be shaped by ongoing consolidation, digital transformation, and evolving healthcare models that prioritize value over volume.

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