

Direct-to-consumer advertising has positive impact on perscription demand

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Brief exposure to direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA) has a large

and positive association with medication-related demand intentions, according to a study published online Aug. 12 in *JAMA Health Forum*.

Matthew D. Eisenberg, Ph.D., from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, and colleagues examined the association between DTCA for [prescription drugs](#) and consumer health-related intentions and beliefs in a cross-sectional study involving individuals at high risk for [cardiovascular disease](#). Participants were randomly assigned to three study arms: exposure to DTCA for health disease medications (treatment 1; 926 participants), exposure to DTCA for heart disease medications with disclosure of price (treatment 2; 921 participants), and exposure to nonpharmaceutical advertising (control; 902 participants).

The researchers identified a [positive association](#) between DTCA and medication-related behavioral intentions, including intention to switch medication and engage in information-seeking behaviors (marginal effects, 0.004 and 0.02, respectively). No evidence was seen for pharmaceutical DTCA discouraging use of nonpharmacological lifestyle interventions that can help manage [heart disease](#). There was a positive association observed between DTCA exposure and consumers' favorable perceptions of pharmaceutical manufacturers. No evidence was seen for the differential associations of disclosures of price in DTCA.

"These results suggest that sustained expansion of DTCA in the U.S. can have important demand effects on [consumer behavior](#)," the authors write. "This study indicates that the threat that DTCA may generate welfare-reducing lifestyle changes is not supported by the data."

One author disclosed financial ties to Amazon and a law firm, and served as an expert witness and consulted with several organizations in the life science industry.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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