

Semiotic analysis of Indian advertisements for mental illnesses

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Abstract

Paper illuminates semiotic analysis of drug advertising for depression, anxiety and its influences on doctors, patients and consumers' behavior. Analytic attention is given to visual and linguistic imagery of advertisements in USA, UK and India. This interpretation and its associated myth have been used in drug advertisements to depict effective therapeutic efficacy or effective treatment. Many of us, doctors, patients and care givers in the family should be aware of these myths of drugs claim in the print as well as in visuals of Indian advertisements for mental illnesses.

Keywords: Mental Illnesses; Advertisement and Mental Health.

1. Introduction

The semiotic analysis has been used in various areas of research such as medical drug and its advertisement brochures (Randhawa et al, 2015), anti-aging products in print advertisements (Milli and Kumar, 2016), and television advertisements and its impact on consumers for differential impact of their themes and colour (Sharma and Gupta, 2015). Advertising has been changed and grown up as a giant industry in our country since 1990s as private television channels had emerged as tough competition to state owned Doordarshan. In 2014, the World Bank placed India as the world's third biggest economy overtaking Japan in terms of Purchasing Power Parity (PPP). Advertising is controlled by its market interests; often accused of stereotyping and avoidance of controversial subjects reflects the popular culture and society through its language and visuals (Lakshmi and Selvam, 2016).

Studies have been done on medical advertisements but they seldom illuminate visual and linguistic mental images of the medicine making tall claims on the treatment efficacy, particularly in mental illnesses- depression, anxiety etc (Lexchin et al, 2004; Mansfield, 2003; Sutherland, 1993). Pharmaceutical product advertising in medical journals offers a privileged channel of communication from drug corporations to doctors, influence on prescribing, medicalizing traditional and social phenomena and promoting medicine as solutions to social issues in everyday life (Scott, Stanford and Thompson, 2004; Kleinman, 2012). WHO has declared depression as the most pressing health issues in the world and predicted an additional increase in its suffering in forthcoming years during nineties. The pharmaceutical trade already began to adopt ways for direct-to-consumer selling to form a preferred recognition of depressive symptoms, to 'grow the market', and to foster a requirement for specific medications. We have a tendency to reside in 'the medicinal drug era'. The pharmaceutical trade in our country is changing into world's biggest producers of prescription drugs, particularly within the field of generic medications and India, quite the other developing country, holds 'great pharmaceutical promise' (see Stefan Ecks, 2005). Further marketing practices of medicines have changed the global mental health, mental health care providers and patients (Huang, 2000; Chern and Landefeld, 2004; Adair and Holmgren, 2005); financial incentives and expensive gifts, vacation and travel with or without family in USA (Angell 2005; Pattison and Warren, 2003), pharmaceutical companies influenced the health functionaries at all level (Dietric, 2007). Similar situation has been emerging in the middle-income countries but here, in India, situation is little different, for example treatment gap between need for medicines and availability of medication (Ecks, 2005, 2013; Ecks and Basu, 2009).

Advertisements for antidepressants have been shown in visual illustration of illnesses/mental illnesses: depression, anxiety, psychosis etc. in medical journals in our country presented as huge threat to wellbeing. As Stefan Ecks (2005) further illuminates the Indian selling of medicines for depression, antidepressants and laid emphasizes on such industries which have controlled a lot of on psychological state through medicine. Several medicine being created within the market as international market wherever individuals created to be free from anxiety, and feel happiness, however they are changing into the drug dependent or drug addicts. Such individuals could also be attributed as marginalized, socially excluded and rising a despair, powerless, humiliation (Narayan, et al 1999, c f Stefan Ecks, 2005). A synchronic and diachronic comparison of the ads for antidepressants published in two most prestigious medical journals. Such analysis in Indian context will facilitate to spotlight the facility of visual language within the construction of social ideas of "health, normality, and happiness" (Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, 2005).

2. Hypertension, asthma and cancer: semiotic analysis of their advertisement

Pharmaceutical industries or advertisers use pictures to construct legendary and probably irrational relationship with medicine and its guarantees to cure diseases, which also create a Culture of Fear to the diseases e.g. high blood pressure and carcinoma within the various advertisements (Scott, Stanford and Thompson, 2001). An advertisement for Hypertension, its medicine Aprovel- a brand for high blood pressure, the image used has been in print in leading medical Journal in Great Britain. Holistically, Aprovel, a brand for high blood pressure the image used suggests an association between high blood pressure and inversion. Further the athletic stunt attracts a “kiss of approval” or Aprovel, may be a complete of drugs for high blood pressure in Europe. “Approval is what you get when you get it right”(Scott, Stanford and Thompson,2001).

Similarly, Symbicort is a drug for asthma attack provides adjustable maintenance of medical aid mentioned in advertisement: “Adjustable maintenance medical aid. You’ve got it in one”. A distorted image has been represented into S, Symbicort snake girl embodies rhyming, sibilant association between Symbicort, snake, sex, and different provocative S-words (symbol, stretch, slither, sensual, slave, suck, etc.). The image in advert signifies a graduated scale for the dose maintenance which may be adjusted up and down. Aggressive colors repeat the brand and counsel eroticism- red frock and lipstick, long black gloves and shoes, hair swept wing back and roguishly un-brushed. The palm trunk signifies a trachea, she its constricting inflammation— the physiology of asthma attack. Her feet square measure stock-still within the ground, legs played like tracheophyte stems. Further main phrase “it could change the way you look at asthma therapy” express story is regarding dynamical the approach we have a tendency to conceive a sickness and its treatment. It's underpinned by a lot of fascinating image of girl and snake, that holds the reader's gaze, fascinated by the sight of a aesthetical girl and constrictor turning into one another (Ibid, p-1485).

Further Taxotere, a leading brand of medication for advanced carcinoma, represents a tableau of Delacroix's Liberty leading the individuals (Fig-1). Pink silk flags substitute for sabers, muskets, pistols, and tricolor within the original painting to evoke the pink ribbons of the (drug trade sponsored) carcinoma awareness campaign. It implies that commitment and belief a lot of necessary than blades and bullets within the fight against carcinoma, a message simplified by removing the naked and dead littering the foreground of original. A triumphant girl lofts her flag, her fine dress force down, revealing her breasts. An armpit, website of liquid body substance nodes concerned in metastasis exhibited. She is robust and delightful, however here eroticisms are restrained, and her nipples diluted, their paleness an attenuated sign of sickness. Husking her breasts counsel, a political statement regarding divesting the shame and secrecy related to carcinoma. The revolutionary stance echoes positions adopted throughout clinical examinations. Her impassive face and sideways look recall the blank expression and posture of 1 undergoing diagnostic procedure. An association is created between gazing at art and medical pictures. Her muscular foot is planted on rock (solid image of medical progress), and her expression is dignified in adversity. The sacred theme is strengthened by a defeated girl kneel at her feet, drawing strength from Liberty “Leading the fight against advanced breast cancer” figure for cancer battle. We have mentioned these cases to elaborate semiotic Analysis of adverts.



Fig. 1: Tableau of Delacroix's Liberty Leading the People by Eugène Delacroix, 1830 in the Musée Du Louvre, Paris.

3. Depression and social anxiety disorder (SAD) and their semiotics

The semiotic analysis of adverts has been interpreted for psychiatric problems-depression and social anxiety disorder (SAD) in folks Magazine-2002. We can see advert of Paxil and its semiotic analysis for period and claimed lifetime of traditional. Will the life be rebuilt to normal? Once life is discontinuous, then its restoration to a “normal” life has been often questioned (see Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, 2005).

Fig. 2: Paxil Advt. in People Magazine-2002.

“... take this advert in Fig-2 individuals’ magazine stating “What’s standing between you and your life?” It claims that Paxil time offers the ability of balance: “Feeling balanced, additional like ‘yourself’, is reachable.” We tend to acknowledge a lady with depression is seen with imprecise gaze. Her arms are wrapped around her in an exceedingly defensive stance. It’s additionally shown that she clearly doesn’t fulfill her role of wife/mother. Further it, as instructed by the displeased, sympathetic look of the person, a husband and father; and also, the stern, virtually accusative look of the small boy, son. This male couple, father and son, is conferred as ineffective within the face of depression. Each cannot restore their wife/mother to “normal”. Their hands reaching down; boy keeps them in his pocket, in an exceedingly posture that means each rejection and helplessness. This has created a wall of symptoms- Depressed Mood, Loss of Interest, Sleep issues, problem Concentrating, Agitation, and Restlessness etc. that keeps the family apart. It means that depression will break the family or creates Associate in nursing imbalance within the family (Ibid).

2002 individuals’ magazine ad, though it’s in poor quality of the image, Paxil ad positions the viewer as spectator to the happy-ending drama of mental disease, whereas inviting her to require action to avoid the case delineated within the pictures through the direct rhetorical queries. The drama evolution within the Paxil ads additionally progresses from a spectacle of aloofness/ detachment characterized by the long shots of the “before” image to at least one of intimacy with the viewer characterized by the close-up of the “after” image. This implies that whereas mental disease are some things to be unbroken unfree, as way as attainable, the new psychological state granted by the magic of the pill permits social intimacy. We are able to see the enabled girl within the Paxil advt. Indeed, within the “after” image of the second Paxil ad, the lady smiles mirthfully up, presumptively at her husband, whereas holding her equally happy son on the brink of her. On the total this Paxil adverts wherever she is shown a recast in an exceedingly socially acceptable role as mother, nurturer and as mate. This is often social order of the paternal that Paxil repaired.

Further we see the opposite advertisements of Paxil in several years as follows. We may see the composition- written matters, pictures, graphs, numerical knowledge etc. in these advertisements.

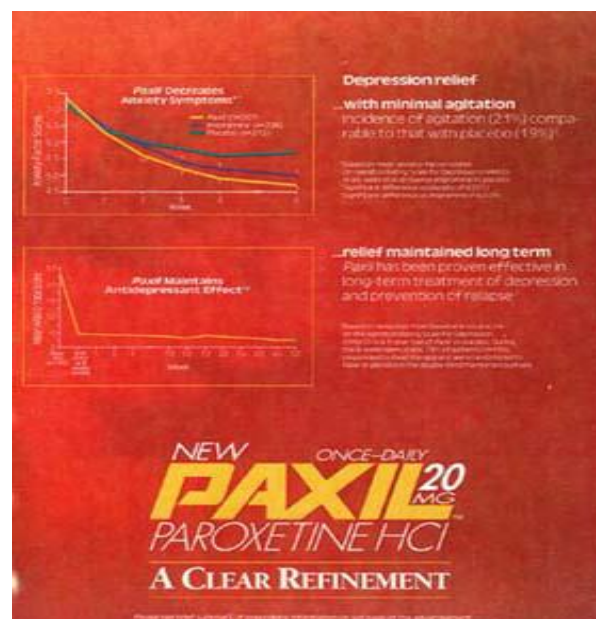


Fig. 3: 1993 Paxil Ad in AJP: Note the Use of Graphs-“Scientific” Mode, As Opposed to Naturalistic Photographs.

The above ads move from “scientific realism” to natural ways in which of presentation of life as “naturalism” with some symbolic components (such because the shadow, the dial, and therefore the serene blue water, the untidy /disordered space vs. the intense outside, the down and up movements). After 1993, they're all photographs; over that, high-modality photographs: they draw United States of America in with the fact of the image, with the implication that this can be correct description of reality. The scientific create is abandoned because the drug enjoys larger business success (Ibid).

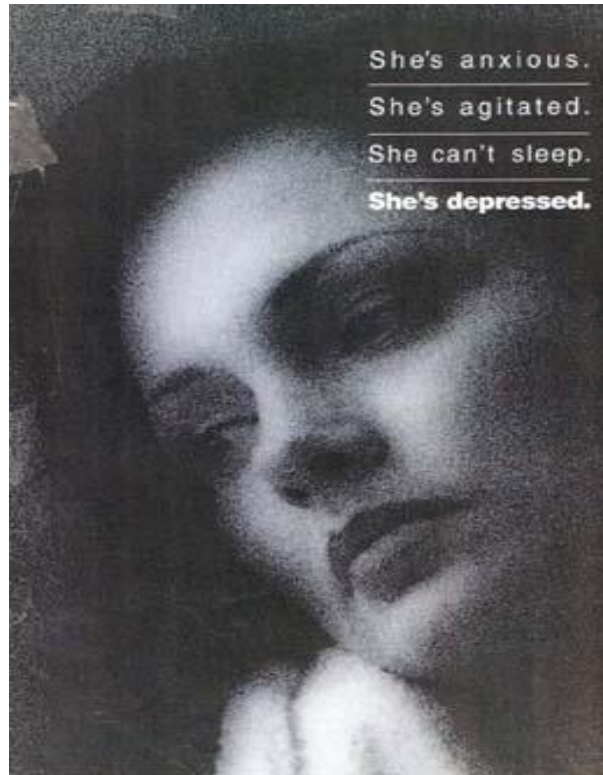


Fig. 4: 1996 Paxil Ad in Americans Journal of Psychiatry (AJP) Portraying the Depression.

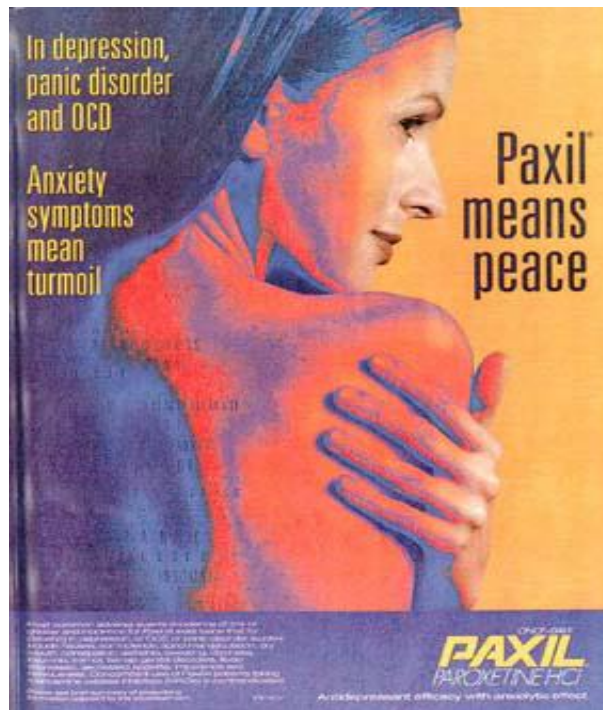


Fig. 5: 1998 Paxil Ad in AJP for the Depression.



Fig. 9: 1998 Paxil Ad in AJP, See Graphic Presentation for the Depression.

These advertisements of Paxil appeared in different countries were critically analyzed for several years (Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, 2005). The cases of social anxiety disorder (SAD) affect one in eight Americans and a giant growth of what was antecedently thought-about a rare disorder. Presumptively the remainder of the individuals within the unhappy market simply has standard timidity or what concerning the marketplace for pathology bar drugs? Recent definitions of low bone density place 30-50% of post-menopausal ladies during this market, a giant market. Pathology bar medicine presently area unit price concerning \$5billion p.a. - expectations area unit that would increase to \$10billion p.a. Further the review of Selling illness by Robyn Williams, promotes the concept of taking tablets to stop bone loss, however what extremely matters is preventing fractures. Taking a drug to cut back hip fracture can be useful for ladies in their 70s and 80s once the chance of hip fracture is high. Except for a girl in her forties or fifties the chance is incredibly tiny. Most girls of this age are comfortable taking exercise instead of pills. Even in older ladies' low bone density is just one amongst several factors contributive to hip fracture, at the side of poor balance, failing seeing and muscle loss. However, within the United States of America, drug promoting keeps conditions like pathology distinguished within the consumer's mind, fueling the will for drug treatment (William, 2005). In Indian context Stephan Ecks (2005) analyzed his filed work data conducted in Kolkatta during 1999-2000 and 2003 for mon-kharap (in Bengali)/bad mind in English equivalent term. He raised the basic questions on the antidepressants in our country and spoke on the "marginality" which is further expounded by the WHO, World bank and voluntary organizations as the form of social inequality or a kind of State of injustice (Ibid, p-240). World Bank reports "Voice of the Poor" mentioned about the term "marginal" and "marginalistaion" to express either social exclusion or unfair distribution of goods (Naryan et al.1999 c.f. Esck,2005). We have analyzed Indian advertisements, in this paper, for depression, social anxiety disorders, etc. as well as such advertisement in other countries particularly in USA and UK promising the better results of their medicine for psychiatric illness.

4. Methodology

Theory: Analytical tools are the basic premise of in the semiotic analysis. It involves an image which could be a sign: an arrangement of graphic elements (from the choice of photographs vs. drawings, color vs. black and white, portraits vs. absence of people, etc.) is used to signify something—a medical as much as a cultural idea of any disease. Thus, advertisers will choose certain signifiers out of a possible pool of images to reflect a particular concept of disease. This signified concept is "fixed" in all advertisements. For example, depression as a cultural as well as a medical concept is fluid, taking on different nuances over time, from a culturally driven explanation to a chemical-driven one. One could see a certain historical development in the way the doctor-patient relationship is construed, as well as the role medicine and pharmacy plays in our everyday notion of health, normality, and happiness.

Method: One of us (MM) has selected, through purposive sample of some advertisements from different medical journals, particularly of psychiatry-Indian Journal of Psychiatry, all issues the current year-2018-2019 and had searched all available issues from the libraries-NML, Delhi; UCMS, GTB Hospital and IHBAS Library in Delhi. Each advert was reviewed to assess its potential contribution to the Semiotic analysis. Initially it was thought to collect most of such advertisements, but there were negligible advertisement of drugs on the cover page of the maximum Journal. So there was not much except some worth to analyze from the four issues of Indian Journal of Psychiatry. Though it was asked for the old issues of this Journal but these were hard bound and were without their cover page, which normally carry the advertisement for drugs of psychiatric medicines. Hence, we were constraint to restrict exploration to these diseases. So, five/six advertisement were select for the Semiotic analysis promoting different medical conditions- social anxiety disorder (SAD), schizophrenia, Bipolar / mood disorders and depression. Our interpretation of these advertisements can be fallible, as its sample is less in this study, other interpretation can be possible.

5. Analysis and result

We summarize in following main analysis and result of sample. Several small advertisements (Fig.-10 to Fig.-12) of psychiatric medicines were collected.

Ad -1: Tablet Oleanz RT for schizophrenia, it reveals a boy drumming out of the rigid walls in the happier mood. The promise it makes is given in the following line: Makes "Life Easier" for all schizophrenics" ...signifies beauty of life as appears in the mood and action of the

boy coming out of the wall. Further the ad uses less space for picture but its single statement is given about the end result of the medicine- depicted through a statement as mentioned above. This one line narrative shows effective end result as an outcome of this medicine for these people. Only do boys in mid thirty suffer? What about the women or young girls? Is it not effective?

Ad-2 and Ad-4: Tablet Dicorate ER and Qutipin SR are for mood stabilizer. When people feel mood swings– up and low in mood then it is prescribed. Then both men and women can be benefitted for outdoor activities; can lead the active life in a new way. Its efficacy is mentioned in following: “The newer way the world prescribes Valproate(salt)”, “Once Daily mood stabilizer”. It seems that it is necessary every day to control mood fluctuation among the people. Qutipin SR redefines the bidirectional mood stabilization. It keeps you fit or normal your mood.

Ad-3: Tablet Opirol, when people do not feel healthy relationship between body and mind then it is prescribed. Then it restores this relationship. It seems that it is necessary every day to control body and mind among the people.



Fig. 10: Ad 1-Tablet Oleanz RT; Ad 2 & Ad4 - Tablet Dicorate ER; and Qutipin SR; Ad 3- Tablet Opirol, Indian Journal of Psychiatry(IJP),2019.

This is advertisement of Sun Pharmaceuticals for various conditions depression in the recent issue of Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 2019 for Ad 1-Tablet Oleanz RT; Ad 2 & Ad4 - Tablet Dicorate ER and Qutipin SR Ad 3- Tablet Opirol depict only the end result of medicine for various condition of depression. It reveals effect after consumption the medicines, end result or rather final recovery as outcome depicted in all advertisement-happy moods, enjoying active life with others. In contrast to others advertisements mentioned earlier, it has not depicted the conditions of depression, “before” consumption of medicine for depression. Stephan Ecks(2005) mentioned experiences of his own field work in Kolkatta about Indian pharmaceutical advertisements during 1999-2000 and 2003. He interpreted elaborately the four advertisements of: Paxidep CR, Apizol, Firstio and Ariptra which directly were for general physicians as well as for the mental health professionals. Further he adds that all people were attractive, fairly white skinned South Asians depicted cheerful in groups of children or their partners-husbands or wives. Moreover, these advertisements do not tell or reveal who is taking or who is not taking these medicines and who has been recovered as per visible detail in advertisements (pp.242-243).



Fig. 11: Etizola Advertisement in Indian Journal of Psychiatry (IJP), 2019.

Etizola may be a drug for broad spectrum Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). As mentioned earlier that anxiety may be a social and situational response to a reaction. It covers all those individuals whose anxiety varies abundant. It varies person to person as per their biological and physiological constitution of the person. Its advertising shows that straightforward room works, a lady feels involved of it. In room work she feels as shown the ghost of tension haunt her up to the room. Concentrate to the daring composition of the narrative (Fig-11) "Anxiety haunts your patients everywhere" further their narratives go as "Shorter action... lesser facet effects" for coverage of across the Anxiety spectrum.

Is Anxiety only haunt to women? What happen when anxiety affects to men and children in different situation? In this advertisement woman is depicted while working in kitchen or making tea for a guest, do the other work while women do also affect in the similar fashion or haunt in similar way?

Further its treatment effectiveness conjointly been mentioned that creates the Advert impact as 17 percent higher response than previous brand-Alprozolam and more Effective in relieving anxiety with physical symptoms

In case of its second advertising we tend to notice a graph shows a claim of over a fifty-four hundred thousand patients covering the various whole of Etizola. These provide freshness in the morning to fifty-four hundred thousand patients. These advertisements replicate a message that Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD) is huge illness among individuals (Fig-12) and need immediate attention to consult the physician or mental health professionals. It seems more people are affected with this disorder, SAD, then pharmaceuticals have created a huge investment of in consuming Etizola -54 Lakh people everyday use it. It means most of us are affected with SAD and must consult their doctors or physicians. There is no doubt, a great pharmaceutical promise' (see Stefan Ecks, 2005) but whose promises and for whom?



Fig. 12: Etizola and Its Variants for Different Aspects of Anxiety in IJP, 2019, See Its Graph and Claim Of 54 Lakh Patients' Promises Freshness in Morning.

6. Discussion and conclusion

We have seen through semiotic analysis of drug advertisement that they depict the variety of diseases and making tall claim for effective treatment. The refinement in Paxil advertisement has been marvelous throughout different years (Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, 2005).



Fig. 13: Paxil Ad, in AJP, 2000.

“I Can” Image created by the ads: Female, a central Picture? It appears that ladies are main “person” gets only such complicated of diseases –depression, treatable by antidepressants. If we tend to examine these ads, we see, they are overpoweringly women; they’re overpoweringly young and white, well-coiffed, terribly engaging, thin, largely with long hair, well dressed, typically business-casual, or not dressed in the slightest degree in some cases, heterosexual. Their bodies’ is slender, their smiles unflawed in most cases in USA. The British Perspective has lots of issue about the normality of ill health and death. The implication within the ads is that any signs of abnormality need immediate corrective action. Thus, stances of tension, worry, or panic, square measure a sporadically condemned as abnormal. The medicine or drug advertisement pushes a definite image of being traditional and makes an attempt to force human expertise into well-confined boundaries, controlled by medication (or the other style of social control). The drug, Doctors entails, is Paxil.



Fig. 14: Paxil Ad, American Journal of Psychiatry (APJ), 1999.



Fig. 15: Seroxat (Paroxetine, Same as Paxil) Ad, British Journal of Psychiatry (BJP), 1995.

The cultural factors produce a special image of psychopathy as represented within the British Journal of medicine. All five distinctive ads for SSRI produce an additional delicate play with absence and distinction. Just one of the ads features a full portrait of a lady. However, the two pictures, before and when, show very little, if any modification within the woman’s facial features. What is more, she’s middle aged, her options not airbrushed, and the total weight of her wrinkles plainly visible. the sole indication of the “sinking” versus “surfacing” is that the position of the framing—an external, graphic interpretation of “illness,” extraneous to the girl portrayed; nearly to point that the framing of health problem as health problem may be a social construct, or nothing over a frame, nothing to try to along with her “selfhood.” Nature isn’t “cooked” or shown deficient; rather, the creator of the ad uses graphical cues that don't impose aspiring to the body.



Figure 1: Ad for antidepressant Deprol, American Journal of Psychiatry, 1964
Fig. 16: Deprol Advertisement Showing Woman in Depression.

In 1964 Ad for Deprol appeared in Journal of medicine (Fig-16). It shows a high-modality (full color, conserving detail and perspective) drawing of an old girl visiting her Doctor. She is visibly distressed, clutching her pearl strings and looking out uneasily over her shoulder. The feminine has overwhelming saliency through her placement within the foreground, the manner lights falls on her, and her relative size. She doesn't have interaction United States directly together with her eyes: she is in a very position of supply. The angle that she is painted at is oblique, suggesting detachment. In distinction, see the doctor within the background is seen at a frontal angle, tantalizing maybe the next degree of involvement within the welfare or treatment of his patient. the lady face related to depression could be a old, well-to-do, white woman. The treatment instructed is, except for the benevolent ear of the medical specialist, Deprol, a tool between patient and doctor that's inexplicit within the image. there's no "after" picture—so we tend to don't grasp what the results of the drug is also, however the interaction depicted, to the extent that we will decipher a narrative line: "To live over the symptoms of depression and associated anxiety", could be a typical one between patient and doctor (Cristina Hanganu-Bresch, 2005).



Fig. 17: Sinequan Advert for Depression Saving the Family.

This ad of Sinequan antidepressant drug was printed twenty-three years later in 1987 (Fig-17) within Journal of medical specialty. It offers a huge distinction with the previous. Though the word "doctor" is preserved within the print, there's no indication of a doctor within the visual composition. In fact, there's no visible clinical interaction of any type, neither is there a relationship implicit with a health-care skilled, apart from through the caption. Instead, we tend to square measure offered the image of an image recent out of a film, capturing a contented family, wearing terribly colorful fall garments. If the Deprol ad only had the "before" (the taking of the drug) image, this one solely has the "after"- the already "processed" ending. The sole indication of a treatment is that the prescription of the drug. Again, the foremost salient figure appears to be the one above within the group- another old, white, middle or upper-middle category lady dedicated to her family and therefore the straightforward pleasures of daily life. The long psychotherapeutic method hinted at within the fine print next to the Deprol ad is altogether bypassed by the magic of the drug. This image symbolically stands for freshly rediscovered happiness within the sort of family time, an ideal family is that the ending of the drug- indeed, Sinequan antidepressant drug will be simply another name for the drug (Ibid).

This paradigm as idea of before and after or then and now has been used for drugs because it clearly makes simpler social control of the drug treatment. We often think that it is used in our country for various presentations of diseases- Graying hair, skin color, height, weight, obesity, cleaning, washing, bathing.... etc. in television, newspapers or all told different prints. It is clearly medicalisation of mundane

issues in our daily lives. Pharmaceutical business has been advertising for enhancing the sale regardless of the treatment effectiveness. This Analysis offers a window thought to question concerning its guarantees, information of solidifying patients in our Country which is urgent need necessary to explore at large scale such analysis for each such publicity.

In our semiotic analysis, we conclude the main issues, which can be sum up as the pharmaceutical advertisement in medical journals provides a privileged channel of communication between the pharmaceutical industry and clinicians (Scott, Stanford and Thompson, 2004). Here medical representatives (MR) in different areas of Delhi approach directly to clinicians for the promotion of specific brand of medicine. It further requires more systematic study of MRs and their incentives linked promotion of medicines. Critical study of imagery employed in drug advertisements reveals it to be one the most powerful weapons of drug promotion. We have seen, in time and space, depiction of drug advertisement has taken more scientific presentation loaded with graphical data. Drug advertising uses strong imagery to fabricate mythical associations between medical conditions and branded drugs. Drug advertising manipulates readers' perceptions by subtle appeal to ancient and modern mythological foundations of humanism. Clinicians are claiming immunity to drug advertising greatly underestimate some advertising agencies, whose skill they should respect as comparable to their own. We feel there is need to assess more systematic study of depiction of mental illnesses or psychiatric diseases in medical advertisement, in television or in print, for its contents, person shown-children, women or men, textual message, perception of patients or care givers about pictures shown in print in our country for the efficacy of claims.

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