

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Method**

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed based on a review of current literature on the area of pharmaceutical marketing efforts to physicians. Some inputs were gathered from sales representatives. The questionnaire was then pre-tested by 2 physicians and their comments and suggestions were taken to improve the quality of the questionnaire. These two physicians were excluded from the subsequent study.

### **3.2 Sampling Design**

The 250 sets of questionnaires were randomly distributed to physicians of government, private and university-based hospitals in Peninsular Malaysia. Five pharmaceutical sales representatives were involved in the distribution of questionnaires. Each of them distributed 50 sets at the ratio of 15 sets to private hospitals and 35 sets to government and university-based hospitals according to their own choice of physicians. All sales representatives were reminded to remain anonymous in the distribution process and do not do "face-to-face" hand over the questionnaire to the selected physician to avoid scepticism.

### **3.3 Research Hypothesis**

#### **3.3.1 Hypothesis A: Usefulness of Source of Drug Information**

There were researches showed that the physicians' has changed their preference on sources of information from commercial to non-commercial source.

The commercial sources are,

- 1 Advertisement in medical journal

- 2 Free Sample
- 3 Sales Representative
- 4 Seminar/ Lecture organized by Pharmaceutical Companies

The non-commercial sources are,

- 1 Medical Books
- 2 Medical Guidelines
- 3 Medical Journal
- 4 Recommendation by Other Physicians
- 5 Conference

Hence, Hypothesis A ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in usefulness between commercial and non-commercial source of drug information.

### **3.3.2 Hypothesis B: Influence on Prescribing Practice**

The change in physicians' preference on sources of information from commercial to non-commercial sources indicates that the sources of influence physicians rely on to decide which drug to prescribe has also changed.

The commercial sources of influence are,

- 1 Advertisement in Medical Journal
- 2 Direct Mail Advertising
- 3 Sales Call/ Detailing by Sales Representatives
- 4 Sales Promotional Material
- 5 Free Sample
- 6 Seminar/ Lecture Organized by Pharmaceutical Companies

The non-commercial sources of influence are,

- 1 Clinical Papers of the Related Drug
- 2 Personal Experience with the Drug
- 3 Recommendations Made by Colleagues in Informal Discussions

Hence, Hypothesis B, ( $H_0$ ): There is no difference in influence on prescribing practice between commercial and non-commercial sources of influence.