

Assessment Of Patient's Perception, Experience And Satisfaction With Therole Of Community Pharmacists

¹Haritha Mohanan , ²Anju TS , ^{3*}Sareena A

¹Department of Pharmacy Practice, National College of Pharmacy, Kozhikode, Kerala
Email: harithamohan31@gmail.com

²Department of Pharmacy Practice, National College of Pharmacy, Kozhikode, Kerala
Email: anjuragesh2012@gmail.com

³Department of Pharmacy Practice, National College of Pharmacy, Kozhikode, Kerala

*Corresponding Author Email: sareenaalungath@gmail.com

DOI: 10.47750/pnr.2022.13.508.120

Abstract

Aim: To assess the current perception, experiences and satisfaction of patients with the role of community pharmacists. **Methods:** A questionnaire based cross sectional study entitled 'Assessment of patient's perception, experience and satisfaction with the role of community pharmacist' was conducted on 148 participants of age 18. Questionnaire was developed, translated to local language and validated. The study was conducted only after getting approval from the Institutional Ethical Committee. The paper forms were distributed to customers coming to community pharmacists. Perception of roles, experience and satisfaction level with community pharmacy services were assessed using SPSS. **Results:** The assessment of awareness showed that 89.5% of the respondents have good perception about community pharmacist's role. The level of satisfaction and experiences with community pharmacists were comparatively lower. 78% participants had good experience, whereas nearly quarter of the participants had low satisfaction with services provided by community pharmacists. According to the experiences with community pharmacists, respondents agreed that community pharmacists are reliable source of drug information (68.2%) and important healthcare professional (89.2%). However, only 38.5% agreed that pharmacists took personal responsibility for resolving drug related problems they discover. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the way community pharmacists labeled and delivered the medicine. **Conclusion:** The study indicated that respondents had positive perceptions towards most of the roles of a CP. However, the views on experiences and satisfaction with current pharmaceutical services were slightly negative. This shows their willingness to be provided with more services. In order to benefit patients, pharmacists must effectively utilize their role. There are shortcomings in professional practices by pharmacists.

KEY WORDS: Pharmacist role; Healthcare; Public views; Pharmacy services; Pharmaceutical care.

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacist is a member of the health-care team who is responsible for providing the public with high-quality healthcare and pharmaceutical care (1). Their goal is to provide optimal drug therapy in all of these domains by offering information and guidance to individuals who prescribe or use pharmaceutical products. (2) In both community and hospital settings, pharmacists play a significant role in maintaining and promoting public health. (3) The term "community pharmacy" refers to a pharmacy setting in which the pharmacist interacts directly with the patients. Retail pharmacies (or Chemist Shops as they are known in our country) are Community Pharmacies in this sense. The public's

most accessible healthcare providers are community pharmacists (4). They provide health/medical services and administer drugs, either on prescription or as over-the counter (OTC) medications, in conformity with legal and ethical guidelines. (5) Problems that cannot be dealt by pharmacists are directed to appropriate health care provider. (6) Thus, they also serve as a link between doctors and patients, allowing for the most effective and efficient use of medications. (3) Views on role of pharmacist is different in different parts of the world. The expansion of pharmacist's role can lead to significant changes in the patient perceptions. Even though pharmacists have the potential to make a significant contribution to public health, it is important that improvements in the behavior of both pharmacists and pharmacy customers would be needed for the service to be effective. Pharmacists must recognize their position in public health. (7)

In India the public's opinion of community pharmacies and pharmacists is quite negative. Community pharmacists are viewed by the general public as drug dealers who are no Introduction no better than basic shop owners. Consumers and patients think of visiting a medical store to buy pharmaceuticals in the same way they think of visiting a grocery store to buy groceries. A retail pharmacist is a person who has obtained a drug license to supply medicines or a grocer who deals in medicines, according to educated individuals. They believe that anyone in our country can operate a stationery and medical supply store. Community pharmacies are commonly referred to as "medical stores" by the general public. In the community practice context, pharmacists are either diploma pharmacists or graduate pharmacists with a B. Pharm. (8)

According to a study conducted in a community pharmacy establishment in a North Indian city (New Delhi), 71% of patients benefited from community pharmacists, however pharmacists mostly serve a commercial function targeted at profit. Because most pharmacies are run without pharmacists, the situation in rural India is particularly poor, particularly in underdeveloped regions (Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh) (9)

METHODS

The questionnaire based cross sectional study was conducted on 148 participants of age above 18. A detailed literature review was done by various resources. The questionnaire was adopted from previous research conducted by Kashif Kamran et al in Pakistan (10) and El-Sharif SI et al in UAE (11), after seeking their permission and was translated to Malayalam (local language of Kerala) using standard translation protocols. The content of the questionnaire was reviewed for local interpretations and necessary changes are done. Questionnaire was then subjected to pilot study on 20 participants and showed an accepted reliability of 0.72. After IEC approval patient who met the inclusion criteria were enrolled in the study. An informed consent was taken from every patient before attending the survey. The data of the pilot study was not included in the original research. The survey forms were distributed to the consumers coming to different community pharmacies. The data entry and statistical analysis is done with using software SPSS version.

RESULTS

Demographic Background

Major participation was from the age group 18-27 with good educational level and from non-medical background (79%). The mean age of the respondents was 30.54. 13.5% of the respondents were having chronic conditions.

Perceptions on the Role of Community Pharmacists

The perceptions on role of community pharmacist's role are shown in Table.1. Majority of the people are aware of pharmacists' role in suggesting the use of prescription medicines (89.2%) and identifying and preventing prescription errors (81.8%). Although majority of the respondents had positive perceptions about community pharmacist's role, only 50% agreed that CP monitored the outcome of treatment. Almost 21% disagreed community pharmacists' role in treating minor illness. Slightly more than half of the respondents agreed with pharmacists' role in providing consultation on the way medication work (58%).99% of participants from medical background have good perception about community pharmacist's role.

Pharmacist's role	Agree N(%)	Neutral N(%)	Disagree N(%)
Providing patient consultation on the way medicines work.	86 (58.1%)	47 (31.8%)	15(10.1%)
Suggesting the use of prescription medicines to patients.	132 (89.2%)	14 (9.5%)	2 (1.4%)
Treating minor illness.	85 (57.4%)	31 (20.9%)	32(21.6%)
Identifying and preventing prescription errors.	121(81.8%)	17 (12.8%)	10 (8.5%)
The pharmacists are good at explaining things in a way that I understand.	109 (73.6%)	29 (19.6%)	10 (6.8%)
Monitoring outcomes of the effectiveness of the treatment.	74 (50%)	47 (31.8%)	27(18.2%)

EXPERIENCE WITH COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS

According to the experiences with community pharmacists, respondents agreed that they are reliable source of drug information (68.2%) and important healthcare professional (89.2%). However, only 38.5% agreed that pharmacists took personal responsibility for resolving drug related problems they discover. Although majority of the respondents had positive perceptions about community pharmacist's role, only 50% agreed that CP monitored the outcome of treatment. Almost 21% disagreed CP's role in treating minor illness. Only around half of the participants agreed that pharmacists routinely counsel patients regarding the appropriate and safe use of medicines.

Experience	Agree N(%)	Neutral N(%)	Disagree N(%)
In my experience, pharmacist is a reliable source of general drug information.	101 (68.2%)	40 (27%)	7 (4.7%)
In my experience, pharmacist is important healthcare professionals in the medical field.	132 (89.2%)	14 (9.5%)	2 (1.4%)
Pharmacist routinely counsel patients regarding appropriate and safe use of medicines.	80 (54.1%)	50 (33.8%)	18 (12.2%)
In my experience, pharmacists take personal responsibility for resolving drug related problems they discover.	57 (38.5%)	62 (41.9%)	29 (19.6%)

SATISFACTION WITH COMMUNITY PHARMACY SERVICES

The level of satisfaction with community pharmacists were comparatively lower. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with the way community pharmacists labelled (70.3%) and delivered the medicine (74.3%). Yet only less than half agreed that pharmacists explained about all side effects (43.9%) and used information about your previous conditions or medication when assessing your drug therapy (42%). More than a quarter of the population disagreed that pharmacist explains about all the side effects (25.7%). Only half of the participants agreed that the counseling respects their privacy

Satisfaction	Agree N(%)	Neutral N(%)	Disagree N(%)
The pharmacist delivers your medicines in a polite way.	110(74.3%)	33(22.3%)	5 (3.4%)
The instructions were clearly labelled by the pharmacists on each medication.	104 (70.3%)	22 (14.9%)	2 (14.9%)
The pharmacist clearly explains to you about all possible side effects.	65 (43.9%)	45 (30.4%)	38(25.7%)
The pharmacist provides you with information about the proper method of storage of your medication.	99 (66.9%)	30 (20.3%)	19 (12.8%)
The pharmacist uses information about your previous conditions or medication when assessing your drug therapy.	62 (41.9%)	54 (36.5%)	32(21.6%)
The place of counseling respects your privacy.	75 (50.7%)	49 (33.1%)	24(16.2%)

Respondents were asked to provide their recommendations for improving community pharmacy services. Major recommendations provided by the respondents were to improve pharmacists' services are to improve communication skills of pharmacists and to provide patient counseling. Some respondents recommended to increase the number of pharmacists working in community pharmacies.

CONCLUSION

The study indicated that respondents had positive perceptions towards most of the roles of a community pharmacist. However, the views on experiences and satisfaction with current pharmaceutical services were slightly negative. This shows their willingness to be provided with more services. In order to benefit patients, pharmacists must effectively utilize their role. There are shortcomings in professional practices by pharmacists. Therefore it is essential to provide training and educational programs to equip CP with knowledge to fulfill their role. Pharmacists' clinical skills beyond medicine supply need to be recognized and appreciated. Continuing education programs, as well as adequate training and support, are needed to equip pharmacists with the necessary knowledge and capabilities to address the evolving needs of pharmacy practice.

REFERENCES

1. Neanderthals T. Seven-star pharmacist concept by World Health Organization; 2014 (March):1–3.
2. Mondiale De La Sante. The role of pharmacists in healthcare system. WHO/PHARM/94.569.
3. Therapy M. ASHP Statement on the Role of Health-System Pharmacists in Public Health. 1981;324–9.
4. The Indian Pharmaceutical Association. Community pharmacy division. [Community Pharmacy Division \(ipharma.org\)](http://www.ipharma.org).
5. Alam M, Karim S, Kapur P, Sharma H, Jindal D, Aqil M. A survey for assessment of the role of pharmacist in community pharmacy services. *J Pharm Bioallied Sci.* 2009;1(1):23.
6. Annex 8 Joint FIP / WHO guidelines on good pharmacy practice : standards for quality of pharmacy services. 2011;(961):310–23.
7. Eades CE, Ferguson JS, Carroll REO. Public health in community pharmacy : A systematic review of pharmacist and consumer views. 2011.
8. Akram Ahamed, Rajesh Balkrishnan. Pharmacy profession in India: Current scenario and Recommendations. *Indian journal of pharmaceutical education* · August 2014 DOI: 10.5530/ijper.48.3.3.
9. Subal Chandra Basak, Dondeti Sathyanarayana. Community Pharmacy Practice in India: Past, Present and Future. *Southern Med Review Vol 2, Issue 1 (2009) 11-14.*
10. Kamran K, Iqbal Q, Haider S, Anwar M, Ishaq R, Saleem F. Public' Perception, Awareness, Expectations and Experiences towards the Role of Community Pharmacists in Quetta City, Pakistan. *J Pharm Pract Community Med.* 2020;6(1):5-9.

11. El-Sharif SI, Alrahman NA, Khaled N, Sayah N, Gamal E, Mohamed A. Assessment of patient's satisfaction with pharmaceutical care services in community pharmacies in the United Arab Emirates. Arch Pharma Pract 2017;8:22-30.