Identifying Community Pharmacists’ Readiness to Participate in Transitions of Care

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Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 147 community pharmacists were in a unique position to widely impact transitions of care. To determine the readiness of community pharmacists to participate in transitions of care and identify additional training perceived to be beneficial.

**Methods**

- Questionnaires distributed to chain pharmacy managers at monthly district meetings
- Questionnaires distributed to community pharmacists in the St. Louis metropolitan area
- Questionnaire reviewed for content and face validity by an expert
- Questionnaire piloted with 3 to 5 community pharmacists
- Descriptive statistics, correlations, and chi square tests used to analyze demographic trends and final results

**Results**

+ **Pharmacist Demographic Characteristics (n=147)**
  - Age (years), mean (SD): 38 (9.5)
  - Female, number (%): 85 (58)
  - Pharm.D., number (%): 88 (60)
  - Years in Practice, number (%):
    - < 5 years: 41 (28)
    - 5-10 years: 33 (22)
    - 11-15 years: 27 (18)
    - 16-20 years: 14 (10)
    - > 20 years: 32 (22)
  - Pharmacy setting, number (%):
    - Chain: 128 (87)
    - Supermarket/Grocery: 15 (10)
    - Independent: 4 (3)

+ **% of Pharmacists Who Agree**

- 1. TOC services improve patients’ understanding of med
- 2. Participating in TOC would enhance my relationship with pts
- 3. TOC services decrease med errors
- 4. I am willing to participate in TOC services
- 5. Community pharmacists should be involved in TOC services
- 6. It would be rewarding to participate in TOC services
- 7. Participating in TOC would enhance my relationship with MDs
- 8. Being involved in TOC services is important to me
- 9. I have sufficient training to participate in TOC services
- 10. I have a clear idea of the role of a pharmacist in TOC
- 11. I do not have time to participate in TOC services

**Objective**

- To determine the readiness of community pharmacists to participate in transitions of care and participate in TOC services
- To assess pharmacist willingness to participate in TOC services
- To identify barriers to participation

**Background**

- Care transitions occur with the movement of a patient across the healthcare system. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission Report to Congress of 2007 identified 17.6% of Medicare patients that were readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of discharge. Of those individuals readmitted, 76% were described as being potentially preventable, resulting in an additional $12 billion in healthcare dollars spent. According to one major study, about 46% of community pharmacists surveyed indicated a lack of reimbursement as the largest barrier to participating in TOC services.

**Discussion**

- While 46% of community pharmacists surveyed indicated a lack of reimbursement related to their role in transitions of care, nearly all respondents believed it would be a beneficial service for patients and pharmacists would be interested in participating.
- Pharmacists listed familiarization with the discharge process, expectations of the service, and updates on clinical information as beneficial training prior to participation.
- It was noted by a number of pharmacists that reimbursement for clinical services related to transitions of care is necessary to compensate for pharmacists’ time and skill set.
- Being aware of perceived barriers can allow pharmacists to address these areas specifically when designing and implementing a transitions of care program.

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