

Public Knowledge and Perception towards the Roles of Pharmacists in Health Care System: A Quantitative Survey Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: A pharmacist is an individual who involved in designing, manufacturing, dispensing, managing and planning of a pharmaceutical care plan. Inside a professional network of patients and pharmacists, pharmacists are expected more for providing pharmaceutical care. It's commonly accepted that the public satisfaction is an essential part in the quality of health care. Unless the patients or public properly understand the professional roles of pharmacist related to patient care activities, the proper and better pharmaceutical care implementation cannot be attained. **Aim:** This survey was planned to conduct with the main aim to determine the knowledge and perception of society towards the roles, responsibilities along with various services provided by the pharmacists. **Materials and Methods:** Based on inclusion criteria 1000 people were included in this study. After giving their consent, survey questionnaires were answered by the people on their own. **Results:** In that majority of the people (45.2%) agreed and 22.9% of people strongly agreed that the pharmacist having important role in health care system. **Conclusion:** This study represents that most of the people (45.2% + 22.6% = 68.1%) know the important roles of pharmacists and indicates that general public having positive perception and knowledge about the various roles of pharmacist in healthcare system.

Keywords: Pharmacist Perception, Knowledge, Health care system.

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INTRODUCTION

A pharmacist is an individual who involved in designing, manufacturing, dispensing, managing and planning of a pharmaceutical care plan and evolving whether the drugs are providing usefulness for the patients or not.¹ Among healthcare professionals, pharmacists are the third largest in the world and pharmacy profession has been evolving steadily over the last ten years in India.² Worldwide, there are many area to practice pharmacy namely academic, hospitals, research centers and community as well as many career opportunities for pharmacists.^{3,4} Pharmacists have providing many services regarding the selection, procurement, preparation, handling and utilization of drugs and confirming that drugs reach the maximal effect for the patients or not.⁵ Above 40 years, the profession of pharmacy has made appreciable strive to switch its aim from supply of drug to direct patient's care especially at bed side.⁶ Inside

a professional network of patients and pharmacists, pharmacists are expected more for providing pharmaceutical care⁷ where as both are having certain and important roles and responsibilities in the patient-pharmacist professional relationship.⁸ It's commonly accepted that the public perception is an essential part of the quality health care system.⁹ Unless the patients or public properly understand the professional roles of pharmacist related to direct patient care activities, the proper and better pharmaceutical care implementation cannot be attained.⁶ Although there are many barriers to pharmacist-patient communication that influence pharmacy practice, the involvement of the patients with their own interest in healthcare is the important need of today.¹⁰ Many studies were conducted to determine public's perception and knowledge on the various pharmacist's roles and responsibilities. Based on the related studies, the results may vary that some indicating a good perception and knowledge where as others expecting the numerous areas need to improve. The general public expecting the pharmacist to take part certain roles to attain desirable outcome of patient's health.¹¹ This survey was aim to determine the knowledge and perception of general public towards the roles, responsibilities along with several services provided by the pharmacists.



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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design, Sample and Study Settings

A quantitative survey was conducted among 1000 subjects by implementing questionnaires.

Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria are participant above 18 years of age, who are willing to participate and able to read and understand the questionnaires. Exclusion criteria are subject having cognitive impairment, those who are in the pharmacy profession and in the medicine.

Ethical considerations

None of the portion in this study needed approval by an ethical committee intended for data collection, as participant's involvement was voluntary and there was no intervention aimed at influencing study participants.

Methods

Based on inclusion criteria a total of 1000 people were included. After giving their consent, survey questionnaires were answered by the people on their own. The information includes demographic and socioeconomic details and questionnaires related to knowledge and perception about role of pharmacists. Knowledge and perception were assessed by questionnaires using 5-point Likert scale (1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Agree, 4. Strongly Agree, 5. Don't Know). Potential responses were received from public. After receiving the responses, knowledge and perception were analyzed. The responders who are not having adequate knowledge and negative perception about the role of pharmacist were provided awareness pamphlet regarding the role of pharmacist in healthcare system.

RESULTS

Demographics details of the participants

A total of 1000 people have included in this study and responded for questionnaires. Out of 1000 majority of the study participants were of age 18-25 years ($n=712$) and were female ($n=578$). The large number of study population was from urban cities i.e., 674 people. 57.6% are done bachelor degree. Table 1 summarizes the demographic details of the study subjects.

Assessment of public knowledge and perception towards the role of pharmacists in health care system

Table 2 gives an overview of knowledge and perception towards the role of pharmacists in healthcare system of study population. While checking all 15 questions individually, majority of the people (45.2%) agreed and 22.9% of people strongly agreed the important role of pharmacists. This represents the most of people ($45.2\% + 22.6\% = 68.1\%$) know the important roles of pharmacists and indicates that general public having positive perception and

knowledge about the various roles of pharmacist in healthcare system. Remaining 31.9% of the responders (5.6% SD, 13.7% D and 12.6% DK) are in the category of strongly disagree, disagree and don't know. This reveals that 31.9% people may unaware or not have adequate knowledge about the various roles of the pharmacist.

DISCUSSION

Pharmacists are the most important persons in health care system of a country by playing different roles in community, clinical oriented practices, hospital, veterinary, academics, and industry. Nations' health is indirectly or directly related to pharmacist services. At the end, pharmacists are behind the rational drug use such as "Right drug to right patient in right dose at right time through right route in right way". Thereby pharmacists are very fundamental also an essential part in the health care system. Determining the public knowledge and perception regarding pharmacist provided health care services offers an insight through which one can determine standards of care, enabling the pharmacist's role to be judged for overall quality and satisfaction.¹¹ This survey renders a wide representation regarding the knowledge and perception of public on pharmacists' role in the healthcare system. A total of 1000 subjects were participated in this survey. It was noted that public had a good level of knowledge and perception regarding the various roles and responsibilities of the pharmacist. Meantime, their level of knowledge on the

Table 1: Demographics details of the study subjects.

Demographic details	Frequency (n = 1000)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	712	71.2
18-25	106	10.6
26-34	84	8.4
35-44	55	5.5
45-55	43	4.3
56 and above		
Gender	452	45.2%
Male	548	54.8%
Female		
Highest level of education	32	3.2%
<High school	193	19.3%
High school	84	8.4%
Diploma	576	57.6%
Bachelor degree	115	11.5%
Master degree or higher		
Locality	674	67.4%
Urban area	326	32.6%
Rural area		

Table 2: Assessment of public knowledge and perception towards the role of pharmacists in health care system.

Sl. No.	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1	Pharmacists are very important part of the health care system like doctors and nurses.	63	42	610	240	45
2	The pharmacist is the first person asks him about drug.	20	223	424	250	83
3	Pharmacists are Considering patients' health more important over business.	47	194	419	222	118
4	Pharmacists provide medicines according to prescription.	27	55	466	408	44
5	Pharmacists always verify prescriptions for rational in terms of drug name, dose and any other problem in taking the medications together before dispensing the medication.	66	86	525	242	81
6	Pharmacists pinpoint right and safe way of medicine usage.	28	82	565	264	61
7	Pharmacists know the best way to take the medicine.	42	91	540	258	69
8	Pharmacists provide guidance for missed dose.	42	182	453	178	145
9	Pharmacists monitoring drug use.	66	200	408	160	166
10	Pharmacists are expert in provide answer for drug related questions.	43	139	470	242	106
11	The pharmacist has the very significant role in preventing medications errors.	49	101	430	250	170
12	I know the clinical pharmacist and his role for the patients.	45	84	464	210	197
13	Pharmacists provide rational drug therapy.	42	146	318	159	305
14	Pharmacists provide patient education.	65	194	399	174	168
15	If my doctor and my pharmacist give me different instructions about my medication, I listen to my pharmacist.	188	227	286	178	121
Average number of populations		56	137	452	229	126
Overall Average Percentage (%)		5.6	13.7	45.2	22.9	12.6

rational drug therapy provided by the pharmacist was moderate. Most of the study participants (61% strongly agreed and 24% agreed) accepted that, like doctors and nurse's pharmacists also very important part of the health care system. This report is correlated to the result of another study, which showed (87.2%) that the pharmacists play a vital role in health care system similar to doctors and nurses.¹² A huge number of participants (76.7%) agreed and strongly agreed that a pharmacist always verify the prescription for its rational in terms of drug name, dose and any other problem in taking the medication together before dispensing the medication. This confirms that the pharmacists are having adequate potential to verify the prescriptions of a doctor in right way. Majority of the participants (82.9%) agreed and strongly agreed that pharmacists always pinpoint right and safe way of medicine usage. This response reveals that public having

good knowledge and perception regarding the pharmacists' roles. Overall, in this study, 45.2% participants are agreed and 22.9% are strongly agreed (totally 68.1%) that the pharmacists having important role in the healthcare system. Where as in another study 55.5% of studied population agreed that pharmacists are vital aspect of health care program. While 84.1% of respondents in another area in the same study either agreed or strongly agreed that pharmacists are mandatory component of health care process.¹³ In our study remaining 31.9% of the responders (5.6% SD, 13.7% D and 12.6% DK) are in the category of strongly disagree, disagree and don't know about the important roles of pharmacist in the healthcare system This reveals that 31.9% people may unaware or not have adequate knowledge about the various roles of the pharmacist.

CONCLUSION

From the collected data we draw the conclusion that most of the general public having a positive or good knowledge and perception regarding the various roles pharmacists in the healthcare system. More ever, demonstrating the various important roles of Pharmacist will also lead to overall acceptance of the image of pharmacists in the healthcare system and the community. Further study involving a large number of populations with education awareness programs provide a clear picture regarding the important aspects about the various roles of pharmacists in the health care setup. Future study will expect to provide significant information about the perception and knowledge of the public about the expected and enhanced role of pharmacists globally.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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