

CHARACTERISATION OF PATIENT ADVICE IN COMMUNITY PHARMACY

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INTRODUCTION

Community pharmacists are in an ideal position to provide advice to patients due to ease of accessibility. The advice community pharmacists provide contributes towards rational use of medicines, promoting safety, efficacy and optimising health outcomes.^{1,2}

AIMS

To describe the type and frequency of patient advice provided in community pharmacy practice

METHOD

- A total of 1000 encounters with a community pharmacist for advice and counselling in one community pharmacy over a 12-week period were observed and recorded in a data collection sheet.
- The developed data collection sheet was validated by an expert panel and characterised patient advice into 7 categories.
- The time taken to address each encounter was documented and the time range was reported.
- Descriptive statistics were calculated to assess the type and frequency of patient advice encounters.

RESULTS

- Of the 1,000 encounters, 88% were directed towards patients who needed self-care and 12% had provision of advice to a proxy to be passed on to patients.
- The 3 most prominent pharmacist-patient advice services were: Medicine information (31%), responding to symptoms (20%) and lifestyle advice (20%). The time to address the 1,000 encounters ranged between 3 and 7 minutes (Table 1).
- For medicine information, advice on dose (34%) and side-effects (27%) was most common. The most common advice in the responding to symptoms category was for musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal symptoms (both 13%). For lifestyle, advice on avoidance of triggers (34%) and diet and weight loss advice (18%) were predominant.

Table 1: Pharmacist-patient advice services (N=1,000)

Pharmacist-patient advice	Percentage (%)	Min-Max time (minutes)
Medicine information	30.6	3-7
Responding to symptoms	20.2	3-7
Lifestyle advice	19.8	2-7
Product recommendation	18.1	3-4
Medical devices	6.8	4-7
Signposting and medical referral	2.9	3-7
Waste disposal	1.6	6-7

CONCLUSION

Characterisation of the provided advice to patients in this study highlights the value of community pharmacists' interventions in patient care in contributing to enhanced medication effectiveness, adherence and patient safety.

References

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