



Assessing Cross-Pharmacy Discipline Collaboration Related to Transitions of Care

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BACKGROUND

- Research demonstrates that incorporation of a pharmacist into initiatives aimed at transitions of care (TOC), such as medication reconciliations and discharge counseling, can help in improving clinical outcomes for patients.¹
- There is sufficient evidence published regarding the communication between pharmacists and their patients, but there is limited to no research done on cross-pharmacy discipline communication, especially in relation to TOC activities.

OBJECTIVES

- Primary Objective
 - To assess the extent of cross discipline communication between pharmacists during patient TOC.
- Secondary Objectives
 - To assess whether there is an association between patterns of pharmacist communication among the different practice settings during patient TOC.
 - To evaluate the potential barriers and facilitators to cross discipline communication between pharmacists.

METHODS

- An anonymous online Qualtrics survey consisting of 20 questions was deployed by email to all pharmacists practicing in hospitals, clinics, telepharmacies, at home care, community pharmacies, and mail order pharmacies within a multisite regional healthcare system. This health system was chosen for its inclusive model which encompasses all aspects of healthcare.
- To be included in the study, the participant must be a fully-licensed, practicing pharmacist who provides direct patient care. An email explaining the purpose of the study was sent to these pharmacists along with one reminder email a week later to obtain maximum participation during the two week period in which the survey was open.
- The survey tool was created by the researchers after obtaining verbal feedback from three practicing pharmacists working in hospital, community, and ambulatory care settings outside the healthcare system. Survey participants provided answers utilizing a combination of multiple choice, select all that apply, open ended, and likert-type scale questions. Survey data for time spent was collected categorically and may equate to greater than a 40 hour week.

RESULTS

- All participants reported reaching out to a pharmacist in another practice setting within the same health system during their normal work week.
- Only 62 (68.9%) participants reported reaching out to pharmacists in settings outside the health system of which 47 (75.8%) reporting only doing so 0-10% of their time

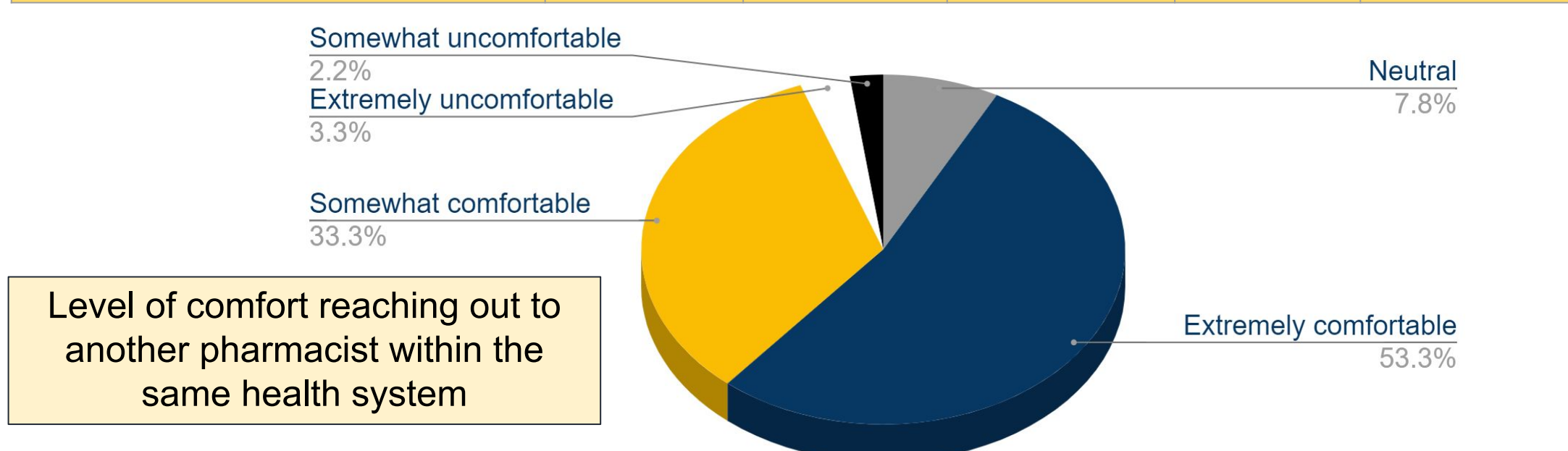
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RESULTS

Percentage of a 40 hour work week pharmacists spent contacting other discipline within the same health system					
	0-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Community n= 86	61	14	4	6	1
Inpatient n=55	34	14	3	2	2
Ambulatory Care n=61	28	20	7	6	0
Telepharmacy n =78	56	15	5	2	0
Mail Order n =90	75	9	2	3	1
At Home Services n =86	77	8	1	0	0
Other n=10	9	1	0	0	0

Forms of Communication Utilized n=90					
	Almost Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Face-to-face	0	2	15	28	45
Phone	13	20	26	26	5
Email	2	9	29	34	16
Video Chat	0	1	5	19	65
TigerText Messenger	17	23	23	19	8
Microsoft Teams Messenger	33	25	16	9	7



Factors Important to Pharmacist Comfort Level n=90					
	Extremely Important	Somewhat Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant
Previous in person meeting	7	23	25	15	20
Ability to reach the pharmacist	56	27	4	0	3
Previous remote interaction	9	30	27	13	11
Pharmacist reputation	8	30	31	9	12
Friendliness of the pharmacist	29	33	18	5	5

TOC interactions across disciplines within the same health system n=90					
	Extremely Positive	Somewhat positive	Neither Positive or Negative	Somewhat Negative	Extremely Negative
Community	30	29	27	3	1
Inpatient	40	32	16	1	1
Ambulatory Care	49	28	12	1	0
Telepharmacy	38	19	32	1	0
Mail Order	26	13	49	1	1
At Home Services	25	9	56	0	0

Percentage of a 40 hour work week pharmacists spent performing TOC activities n=90					
	0-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Obtaining a medication history	43	30	11	5	1
Counseling on medications	28	27	13	13	9
Providing patient education on disease states	44	14	12	12	8
Performing warm hand-offs	52	23	7	6	2
Making follow-up phone calls	44	19	19	4	4
Recommending MTDM* services	42	17	15	6	10
Reviewing Pharmacist EHR Documentation	26	35	16	9	4
Other n=10	6	1	0	1	2

*MTDM = Medication Therapy Disease State Management. Health system term for pharmacy services provided by pharmacists in Ambulatory Care.

PHARMACIST DEMOGRAPHICS

Study Enrollment	n
Total number of pharmacists on the email list	412
Total number of survey responses	132 (32% response rate)
Included n=90	
Excluded n=42	
Reasons for exclusion	
Respondent did not provide direct patient care	12
Respondent did not complete all questions	30

Pharmacist Demographics n=90	n (%)
Age	
≤ 24 years old	1 (1.1%)
25 - 44 years old	65 (72.2%)
45 - 64 years old	20 (22.2%)
≥ 65 years old	4 (4.5%)
Sex	
Female	60 (66.8%)
Male	27 (30.0%)
Prefer not to answer	3 (2.2%)
Years in Practice	
< 5 years	22 (24.4%)
5 - 10 years	25 (27.8%)
10 -15 years	15 (16.7%)
15 - 20 years	4 (4.4%)
> 20 years	24 (26.7%)

Pharmacist Practice Experience n=90	n (%)
Primary Practice Site	
Inpatient	35 (38.8%)
Ambulatory Care	29 (32.2%)
Telepharmacy	12 (13.2%)
Community	4 (4.4%)
At-home services	4 (4.4%)
Other	6 (6.5%)
Completed training focused in TOC	29 (32.2%)
Worked or Trained in Other Disciplines	78 (86.7%)

CONCLUSION

- The majority of participants feel either extremely comfortable (53.3%) or somewhat comfortable (33.3%) reaching out to another pharmacist within the health system. However, most contacted other pharmacy disciplines ≤ 25% of their work week.
- The ability to reach the pharmacist was the most important factor to pharmacist comfort. Moreover, not knowing who to contact was the biggest barrier.
- Improving awareness of system-wide pharmacist directories and distribution of pharmacist schedules may improve communication.

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