



Role of Pharmacist on global health

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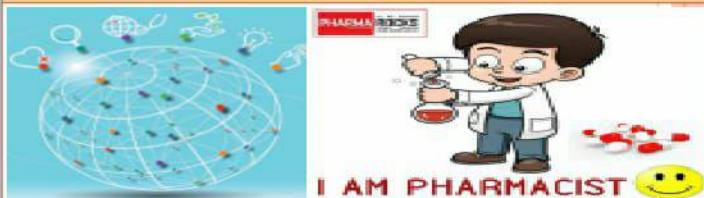
ABSTRACT:

Pharmacists, being an integral part of the health care team, have a remarkable contribution in public health care delivery with the increasing health demands globally. This presentation aimed to determine the pharmacists' knowledge, perception and competencies in the importance of the implementation of global health initiatives in both local and international areas.

INTRODUCTION:

Global Health is defined as the area of study, research & practice that places a priority on improving health & achieving equity in health for all people worldwide. Many developing countries are currently dealing with the burden of both communicable and non-communicable diseases. The demand for better health is rising as people's incomes increase. According to the Consortium of Universities for Global Health (CUGH), global health should refer to the scope of a problem rather than a geographical location. The scope of work of pharmacists in diverse settings faces challenges of global health such as self-care & self-medication, management of diseases through medication therapy management (MTM), resistance to existing drugs or recreational drugs being abused, medicines supplied through unregistered online pharmacies, online advertising of prescription drugs, direct-to-consumer websites and the distribution of substandard & spurious, falsely-labeled, falsified or counterfeit medicine. Global health pharmacy aims to define, promote and recommend the need to go beyond the pharmacist's traditional role of drug dispensing to being an integral part of the health care team. This will also provide clear insights into the emerging roles of pharmacists in global health and gauge the level of competencies and perception of pharmacists in adopting this role.

Pharmacists participate in health fairs and perform blood pressure screening, blood glucose monitoring, memory screening, brown bag session counseling, etc. Table 1 lists Healthy People 2020 Leading Health Indicators, which are key focus areas that can be applied to promoting educational and manpower needs abroad. The American Public Health Association (APHA) released a policy statement on the role of the pharmacist in public health outlining similar roles to healthy people 2020 leading health indicators.



ROLE OF PHARMACIST

- Providing population-based care.
- Developing disease prevention and control programs (including medication safety programs) in their institutions and communities.
- Developing health-education policies and programs within their institutions that address the needs of patients, other health care professionals, community leaders, and the public.
- Collaborating with state and local authorities, including local and state health departments and boards of health, to address local and regional health care needs (including environmental hazard and emergency preparedness programs).
- Advocating for sound legislation, regulations, and public policy regarding disease prevention and management.
- Engaging in population-based research and initiating campaigns to disseminate new knowledge.

At the local or state level

- Contact Health Boards and task forces.
- Use education and awareness programs.
- Report unusual sales volumes for medications or patient complaints.
- Be an advocate for local citizens and keep eyes open for issues.

At the federal level

- Contact task forces with professional organizations.
- Serve on review panels or government committees.
- Use national voluntary reporting systems

At the international level

- Participate in voluntary medical and humanitarian aid.
- Raise awareness for international travelers of risks and prevention.
- Donate money or supplies.

Health indicator	Pharmacist program examples
Physical activity	Patient counseling
Overweight and obesity	Patient counseling, diabetes/lipid/etc clinics, cholesterol screenings, blood pressure screenings
Tobacco use	Smoking cessation programs
Substance abuse	Psychopharmacology consults/liaison, Medication therapy management (MTM)
Responsible sexual behavior	Patient counseling
Mental health	Psychopharmacology consults/liaison, MTM
Injury and violence	Patient counseling & supportive service referrals
Environmental quality	Patient counseling, smoking cessation programs
Immunization	Pharmacist-administered immunizations
Health care access	MTM, Free clinics, indigent drug programs, student clinics

Table 1: Healthy people 2020-Leading health indicators (adapted from U.S. DHHS 2010)

CONCLUSION:

The role of pharmacists is changing continuously to meet the local needs throughout the world. This can be seen through the shifting from product-centred services to patient-centred services. Pharmacists have the potential to play an important role in both public and global health by providing information and advice on the therapeutic use of medicines. Clinical pharmacists play a big part in the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary global health. Community pharmacist plays a crucial role in the management of chronic diseases such as asthma, arthritis, palliative care and pain, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension.

References:

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