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Sale of medications without prescription and quality of assessment and counseling to cardiac patients by community pharmacies: A simulated-client based study

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Purpose: Easy access to pharmacies and self-medication is common in Saudi Arabia. The interaction of pharmacists with cardiac patients and their counseling in is unknown. In this study we sought to explore how pharmacists interact and counsel cardiac patients.

Methods: A total of 600 community pharmacies in the two large cities were randomly selected and stratified by the region, and time of the day and week. Two investigators visited each pharmacy and simulated having a parent with either chest pain for the acute coronary syndrome (ACS) scenario or shortness of breath for acute heart failure (AHF) scenario. Further information was provided only if asked for by the pharmacist. Other investigators observing the conversation, and once the conversation over, the results of this interview were recorded immediately after leaving the pharmacy.

Results: Of 600 pharmacies, 380 (63.3%) pharmacists advised the simulated patient to seek medical care, more so with the ACS scenario (70.3% vs. 56.3%, $p < 0.001$). The pharmacists were likely to advice patients to seek medical advice during weekdays than weekends, and during the morning hours than during the evenings or nights. Pharmacists sought more information regarding other symptoms and comorbidities with the simulated ACS patients (59.7% vs. 48.7%, $p = 0.009$ and 46.3% vs. 37.3%, $p = 0.031$ respectively).

Conclusions: Assessment of simulated cardiac patients by community pharmacists was inadequate and the quality of provided counseling is extremely suboptimal. This indicates the need for the implementation of major practice changes to improve the quality of service worldwide.

Biography

Abdulaziz U Joury is 25 years old, recently graduated from the medical school at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Currently, he is working as Scholar Cardiology Physician in King Fahad Medical City. He was trained at numerous hospitals. He represents his country nationally and internationally on several occasions. He held several classes and workshops covering medical field. Coordinated numerous campaigns and participating in number of researches.

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