

Overview of Community Pharmacies and Pharmacists Worldwide in Self-Care

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DESCRIPTION

When people need expert information and assistance or have health issues, community pharmacies are frequently the first site they turn to. These clinics offer vaccinations, health promotion, education, and pharmacotherapy follow-up in addition to providing patients with necessary medications and treatments. Community pharmacies are therefore seen as a crucial and vital location in the context of the epidemic. Community pharmacists are regarded as the most approachable medical professionals in these facilities, increasing public access to appropriate information about the disease and preventive measures, such as proper mask and hand hygiene, screening for suspected cases, and, if necessary, making the right referral for the patient.

While there is undoubtedly room for pharmacy to make a distinctive contribution to public health, the service is probably going to need to adapt in the way that both clients and pharmacists behave. In order to perform their function in public health, pharmacists must acknowledge it and alter their behavior accordingly. Likewise, the public has to acknowledge pharmacists as public health service providers and be open to consulting pharmacists rather than other experts when it comes to certain health-related matters. The term "self-care" refers to more than only the items in American pharmacies' "Over-The-Counter" (OTC) aisle.

The seven main pillars of self-care are knowledge and health literacy, mental health, self-awareness and agency, physical activity, healthy eating, risk avoidance or mitigation, good hygiene, and the prudent and responsible use of goods and services, according to the International Self-Care Foundation (ISCF). "The ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote their own health, prevent disease, maintain health, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health worker" is how the World Health Organization (WHO) defines self-care. These pillars and the WHO definition of self-care are followed in the United States, self-care encompasses all facets of health and wellness as mentioned in the seven pillars and goes beyond "OTC products."

Currently, the United States lacks specific funding for these aspects of self-care as well as a national self-care strategy.

Nonetheless, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) comprises a number of agencies that encourage and support self-care programs. When it comes to helping patients with the five pillars of self-care, community pharmacists play a special role. This frequently entails teaching the patient about reasoned and appropriate usage, the seventh pillar of self-care. Pharmacists, for instance, protect patients' usage of Over-The-Counter (OTC) drugs so they can maximize benefits and minimize hazards. In line with the WHO definition of self-care, the pharmacist plays a "key role in providing assistance, advice, and information to address self-care needs." One of the easiest to reach medical experts is the community pharmacist. Ninety-three percent of Americans reside five miles or less from a community pharmacy, and patients see their neighborhood pharmacist almost twelve times more frequently than they see their primary care physician. OTC medicines and other self-care products are typically patients' first line of treatment for minor health conditions.

In recent years, pharmacists have been able to offer a wider range of comprehensive patient services. Pharmacists who possess "provider status" in numerous states are able to bill for clinical services rendered to patients, rather than only distributing prescription drugs. The ability to prescribe hormonal contraceptives and pre/post-exposure prophylaxis for Human Immune Deficiency Virus(HIV), test-to-treat for infections, and collaborative practice agreements that enable pharmacists to address a wide range of disease states are just a few of the expanded roles that vary by state.

The majority of pharmacists who participated in the review had good opinions of and believed that delivering public health services was a crucial role. This shows that the value of offering these services is recognized, and that community pharmacies are increasingly accepting of their role shifting from traditional dispensing activities to greater involvement in health improvement. Nonetheless, the assessment suggests that roles associated to medicine continue to take precedence over public health responsibilities. Pharmacists were less confident in their ability to provide public health services because they believed that they were less significant than traditional roles. Some pharmacists also had less favorable opinions about specific public health programs, especially those that assist drug abusers.

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