

2nd International Summit on Clinical Pharmacy

December 02-03, 2014 DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel San Francisco Airport, USA

Health promotion and education activities among community pharmacists in Kuwait

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Objectives: To investigate self-reported practice of pharmacists regarding health promotion and education activities, explore the barriers that may limit their involvement in health promotion and education, and identify their willingness to participate in continuing education programs related to health education.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was performed using a pre-tested questionnaire on a sample of 223 community pharmacists.

Results: The response rate was 92%. Information on medication use was the most frequent reason for consumers seeking community pharmacists' advice. The majority of respondents believed that behaviour related to the proper use of drugs was very important. There was less agreement on the importance of other health behaviours. Respondents indicated they were involved in counselling patients on health behaviours related to use of drugs as prescribed/directed, weight management, medicine contents and side effects, diet modification and stress reduction, but were less involved in counselling on other health behaviours. Respondents' perception of themselves as "most prepared" to counsel patients closely reflected their involvement. Pharmacists reported high levels of success in helping patients to achieve improvements in using their drugs properly compared to low levels in changing patients' personal health behaviours. The majority of respondents believed that pharmacists had a responsibility for counselling consumers on health behaviours (97%, 95% CI: 95-99%), and indicated their willingness to learn more about health promotion (84%, 78-88%). Lack of pharmacists' time was reported by about 58% of respondents as the major barrier limiting pharmacists' provision of health promotion.

Conclusions: The role of community pharmacists in health promotion and education is primarily focused on pharmaceutical issues rather than health behaviour modification. The majority of respondents have a positive attitude towards counseling the population on health behaviours and indicated their willingness to learn more about health promotion. The perceived preparedness needs to be improved and supported by various activities.

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