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Title: *A Survey of Pharmacists' Comfort and Competency When Addressing Mental Health Related Medications*

#### Abstract

**Purpose:** Pharmacists are in a unique position of being a convenient and knowledgeable point of contact for patients with behavioral health conditions. Pharmacists must be both proficient and comfortable when counseling patients about mental health and the associated medications. Knowledge of the adverse events, as well as the potential for interactions must be a part of every pharmacists' skills and should be taught extensively during didactic and experiential education. Pharmacists as healthcare providers are working towards removing the stigma associated with mental health and making every patient feel more comfortable about his or her health.

**Methods:** The participants in this survey were final year pharmacy students (P4 Students) or licensed pharmacists with either an RPh or PharmD designation. Survey participant demographics were open to age, practice site, race, religion, gender, and number of years in practice. The survey consisted of 20 questions, one of which was a consent for participation in the survey, four as demographic questions, and 15 evaluating the participants comfort and preparation related to mental health.

**Results:** According to the pharmacists' experiences, no pharmacy schools had mental healthcare as a required clinical rotation, and as an elective, only 35.2% of responders participated in a mental health education clinical rotation. However, responses showed 56.3% of responders believed at least one required rotation should be dedicated to mental health prior to graduation, and 77.5% of responders believed mental health education should play a larger role in pharmacy school curriculum. According to two survey questions, 97.2% of the pharmacists stated pharmacy school adequately prepared them to discuss hypertension with patients compared to 47.9% of the pharmacists who felt adequately prepared to discuss mental healthcare.

**Conclusion:** With the stigma surrounding mental healthcare beginning to disappear, pharmacists need to be more knowledgeable on this topic. Communities rely heavily on pharmacists for questions regarding medications and must be able to provide the best service possible. With less than half of the pharmacists who responded to this survey feeling adequately prepared by pharmacy schools to discuss this topic, more needs to be done during didactic and experiential education to prepare future pharmacists.