

Barriers to Integrating Community Pharmacists into Transitions of Care.

Megan Muldoon PharmD Candidate 2021, Meredith Huffman PharmD/MBA Candidate 2021, Chris J. Lynch, PharmD, and Kelsey Schwander PharmD
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy, 200 University Drive, Edwardsville, Illinois 62025;
email: mmuldoo@siue.edu, mhuffma@siue.edu, jalynch@siue.edu, kelschw@siue.edu

KEY WORDS: community pharmacists, transitions of care

Abstract

Purpose: Transitions of care is a critical time in which communication between providers is essential to providing the best patient care possible. Despite the safeguards in place, there are still holes within our healthcare system that can lead to errors in patient care. This study was designed to identify barriers and potential solutions for the gap found within transition of cares in the community pharmacy setting.

Methods: This study was designed as a descriptive analysis. A community pharmacist targeted survey was created and distributed to uncover perceived barriers and potential solutions to create a smooth transition home for recently discharged patients. Survey distribution was facilitated by social media and email while data was collected through an online survey database, known as Qualtrics. Respondents were asked to disclose the type of community pharmacy they were employed at, their years of experience, and how many prescriptions they fill per day. Common potential barriers and solutions to integrating post-discharge communication in community pharmacies were found through primary literature searches and presented so pharmacists could rank them based on their perceived significance. Barriers and solutions perceived most important were to be ranked a 1 and to be worth 6 points when analyzing data while items ranked least important were to be ranked a 6 and deemed 1 point. Statistical analysis comparing different pharmacist demographics will be conducted as part of a subgroup analysis.

Results: A total of 82 community pharmacists completed the survey by the given due date. Using the predetermined point system mentioned above, the barrier perceived most significant by community pharmacists was insufficient staffing. This was followed by time commitment and lack of communication between providers in the hospital and pharmacy. Community pharmacists indicated that increased staff would be the best solution to the barriers they ranked and access to patients' electronic health record (EHR) was ranked second. Other prominent solutions include creating patient-friendly updated medication lists and institutions clearly labeling discharge prescriptions, with instructions if replacing medication.

Conclusion: Our research uncovered community pharmacists' perceived barriers to implementing post-discharge communication into workflow as well as proposed solutions. This data will pave the way for implementing change in community pharmacies in order to create better, more efficient care as patients transition across healthcare settings.