

Evaluation of Pharmacists' and Student Pharmacists' Perspectives on the Development of a Women's Health Pharmacotherapy Elective Course

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Introduction

The United States has been facing troubling challenges with increasing maternal mortality rates unlike other high-income countries for the past two decades. This alarming trend may be attributed to women having children later in life, raising the risk of development of new health conditions. These maternal health complications threaten both the mothers and their children, which could result in lifelong health consequences. Despite these profound healthcare challenges, the U.S. healthcare system has yet to effectively implement a system for these women. In addition, new laws are allowing pharmacists to have the opportunity to prescribe contraception in which they may not be comfortable. This study aims to explore the thoughts and perspectives of students and current pharmacists regarding topics covering women's health pharmacotherapy in pharmacy school, and if an elective course offered at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Pharmacy (SIUE-SOP) would be beneficial in practice.

Methods

An anonymous 11-question survey was distributed to third- and fourth-year pharmacy students, residents, alumni, and clinical faculty members at SIUE. The survey was sent to the participants on August 9, 2024, with the final day being September 6th, 2024, for the final day to participate. The primary objective focuses on gathering participants' perspectives on the creation of an elective course specifically addressing women's health pharmacotherapy.

Results

Out of 188 participants, 146 were included in the study. Baseline characteristics showed that there were higher rates of participants who were alumni, female, and Caucasian. Of all of the survey questions, only two were considered statistically significant. For question 6, addressing NAPLEX competency with women's health topics, a significantly higher proportion of P3 and P4 students (27%) strongly agreed that these topics are important to understand, compared to 8% of alumni and residents ($p < 0.001$). For question 9, assessing comfortability with the new contraception prescribing rights law for pharmacists of Illinois, 16% of P3 and P4 students strongly agreed that they were comfortable with this responsibility compared to 5% of alumni and residents ($p = 0.02404$).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the survey, the implementation of a women's health pharmacotherapy elective course at SIUE SOP would be beneficial to address the knowledge gap that current students and practicing pharmacist face when encountering topics of women's health.