

Health and Wellbeing of Long-Term Care Pharmacists During Flu Season

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Background: Pharmacists serve a critical role during flu season through vaccine administration, patient education, and medication management. While previous research has examined the impact of seasonal influenza on healthcare providers, limited data exists regarding the specific effects on long-term care pharmacists.

Objective: To assess and compare the health and wellbeing of long-term care pharmacists during and outside of flu season and identify factors contributing to work-life dissatisfaction.

Methods: A survey was sent to pharmacists (n=52) at HealthDirect Pharmacy Services, a long-term care pharmacy organization that services approximately 40,000 beds across 9 different states, via email. The survey assessed pharmacists' perceptions of workload manageability, task completion, burnout, work meaningfulness, and staffing adequacy during normal operations versus flu season. Participants also identified key contributors to work-life dissatisfaction during both periods.

Results: Nine pharmacists responded (17.3% response rate). During everyday life, 89% of participants agreed their workload was manageable, compared to 33% during flu season. Task completion rates decreased from 89% to 33% during flu season. Reported burnout increased from 44% during everyday life to 89% during flu season. While all participants found meaning in their work throughout the year, perceived staffing adequacy decreased dramatically from 89% during regular operations to 22% during flu season. The primary stressor shifted from workload (56%) during normal operations to vaccinations (89%) during flu season.

Conclusions: Long-term care pharmacists experience significant decline in workload manageability, task completion rates, and overall wellbeing during flu season, despite maintaining a strong sense of professional purpose. These findings suggest the need for targeted interventions including seasonal staffing adjustments, distributed vaccination scheduling, dedicated flu clinic personnel, and team-building initiatives to support pharmacist wellbeing during predictable high-stress periods.