



Perception of patients towards the knowledge of community pharmacist as a health care provider: A pilot study

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Received: 29-05-2015 / Revised: 23-06-2015 / Accepted: 29-06-2015

ABSTRACT

With the changing scenario of the health care services the role of Community Pharmacist is slowly and steadily changing from the dispenser of the drugs to a healthcare provider. Patients / consumers trust on their pharmacist is the primary criteria for the successful integration of community pharmacist in the healthcare services. The present study aims to evaluate the perception of patients/consumers towards their community pharmacist. A 11-item questionnaire was used to assess the present study. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17. 57.33% participants agreed that they believe their pharmacist as a healthcare provider. 73.33% participants agreed that they trust their pharmacist with their prescriptions and drug related information. 38% and 48.66% participants strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they consult their pharmacist for minor ailments. 34.66% participants said they would like blood glucose monitoring as an extended service to be provided by their pharmacy followed by Blood pressure monitoring, cholesterol monitoring, patient medication record keeping and reminder services for medication. It was concluded that patients/consumers trust their community pharmacist with their drug and lifestyle related issues.

Key Words: Community Pharmacist, Healthcare Provider, Lifestyle Modification, Perception, Knowledge



INTRODUCTION

With the significant growth and development over the past years, the profession of pharmacy has evolved to a new concept called **Pharmaceutical Care** which can be defined as “the responsible provision of drug therapy for the purpose of achieving definite outcomes that improves the patient's quality of life”. [1] Despite their considerable training, community pharmacists are the health professionals who are not primarily rewarded for delivering health care services and hence are under-utilized as public health professionals [2]. However, community pharmacist can play an important role in patient's counseling and education and should be able to give basic drug information in terms of appropriate drug usage, administration, dosage, side effects, storage and drug–drug and drug–food interactions [3]. An issue that is specific to the profession of pharmacy and to the pharmacists providing pharmaceutical care is that many patients does not know what to expect from their interaction with their pharmacists, or their expectations are set so low that they are easily

satisfied. [4]. Many studies have been performed to understand the patient's perception, attitude and satisfaction towards their community pharmacists and their services. [5-9]. To integrate the community pharmacists in the main stream of health services it is necessary to gain the trust of patients. Trust is one of the important factor which will affect the relationship between the pharmacist and the patients and in turn it will help in improving the "pharmaceutical care" services provided by the pharmacists. The primary objective of this pilot study was to understand the perception and the trust factor of the patients towards the knowledge of their community pharmacist as a health care provider.

METHODS

Study design and site selection: The study was based on a cross sectional survey which was conducted for a period of one month February 2015 to March 2015 on the patients/ consumers visiting the local pharmacy located in the area of Nerul, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India, 400706. Prior

permission from pharmacist was requested and obtained to approach consumers when they entered the pharmacy to ask them to complete the questionnaire while they were on the premises.

Sample size: Sample size was calculated as 383 by keeping the confidence level of 95%, Margin error 5, and population of 111,947 in Navi Mumbai area[10], using Raosoft sample size calculator online.[11]. Due to financial constraints the study was planned as a pilot study in the specific area of Nerul and sample size was kept as 150 while keeping the Confidence level of 95%, Margin error 5%. Consumers aged above 18 were included in the survey.

Data collection: A cross-sectional survey was distributed to patients visiting community pharmacies to understand the perception of general public towards their community pharmacist. The questionnaire was hand delivered to the patient/ Consumer visiting the pharmacies and the purpose of this study was explained to them. The questionnaire was to understand the trust factor of the patient/ Consumer towards their community pharmacist. Some possible extended services were listed, and the participants were asked to specify one of service they would prefer to be provided by community pharmacies [12]. All the 150 questionnaires were received back with 100% response.

Data Analysis: The questionnaire was coded, checked for accuracy and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0 for Windows.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demography details: The demographic characteristic of study population is shown in table 1. Of the 150 there were 108 (72%) were male and 42 (28%) were female. 64 (42.66%) participants were graduate, 34 (22.66%) participants were postgraduate, 30 (20%) participants were 12th pass, while 22 participants (14.66%) had studied till 10th. 24% participants were in the age group of 18-25years, 265 participants were in the age group of 26-35 years, 28% between 36-45, while 22% were above 45 years. Majority (n=55, 36.6%) of participants were in the private job followed by participants who were not working (28%). 20.66% were involved with the business and 14.66% were employed with government sector.

Community Pharmacist as a Healthcare Provider: Participants were asked about their view on pharmacist as a healthcare provider. The objective of this question was to study the

perception of participant about their pharmacist. 57.33% (n=86) participants agreed that they think of their pharmacist as a healthcare provider, while 28% (n= 42) participant strongly agreed as for their pharmacist as a healthcare provider. 14.66% (n=22) participants disagreed/ strongly disagreed that their pharmacist was a healthcare provider.

Participants Trust on Their Pharmacist:

Question no.2 to question no.6 was asked from the participants to evaluate their trust factor on their community pharmacist. 73.33% participants agreed that they trust their pharmacist with the prescription that he will provide them correct medicament it was also observed that only 3.33% of the participants did not trust their pharmacist with their prescription. 71.99% (n=108) participants strongly agreed/ agreed that their pharmacist can change the brand of drug prescribed by their physician. 42 (28%) participants said they won't allow their pharmacist to change the brand without consulting their physician. 50.66% participants agreed while 18.66% participants strongly agreed that if the pharmacist is prescribing a different brand of drug it's for their betterment while 30.66% (n=46) didn't share the similar view. 70% (n=105) participants agreed and 25.33% (n=38) strongly agreed to follow the precautions/ instructions given by their pharmacist while only 4.66% (n=7) disagreed/ strongly disagree to follow the instructions. 68.66 % (n=103) participants said they won't allow their pharmacist to change their prescription according to current medication, while 31.33% (n=47) agreed/ strongly agreed that their pharmacist can change their prescription.

Participants Perception on The Knowledge of Their Pharmacist:

Question from number 7 to 11 were included in the questionnaire to evaluate the perception of participants about the knowledge of their community pharmacist. 38% (n=57) and 48.66% (n=73) participants strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they consult their pharmacist for minor ailments like headache, cough and cold etc. 13.33% (n=20) participants disagreed/ strongly disagreed that they consult their pharmacist for minor ailments. 77.33% (n=116) participants strongly agreed/agreed that their pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe them medicines for minor ailments. When participants were asked about their view on whether they find their pharmacist knowledgeable enough to prescribe the medicine for specific major ailments like cancer etc, 82% (n=124) disagreed/ strongly disagreed on this view, while only 17% (n=26) strongly agreed/ agreed that their pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe you medicine for specific major ailments. 55.33% (n=83) and 19.33% (n=29) participants agreed and

strongly agreed respectively on the fact that their pharmacist can provide them the information regarding lifestyle diseases. 18.66% (n=28) and 71.33% (n=107) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they will follow the advice given by their pharmacist to prevent lifestyle diseases. It was observed that 0% (n=0) strongly disagreed on the above point.

Reason to Visit the Local Pharmacy: Table 3 shows the reasons to visit a particular pharmacy. When participants were asked about their reason to visit their pharmacy 50% (n=75) responded that they visit their pharmacy to get the prescribed medicine while 11.33% (n=17) visit their pharmacy for drug related queries. 38.66% (n=58) said they visit their pharmacy for both the purpose i.e. to get the prescribed prescription as well as drug related queries. 32.66% (n=49) participants visited a particular pharmacy as its near their house while 22% (n=33) said that they visit a particular pharmacy because of their trust factor while majority of participants 38.66% (n=58) cited both the above reasons to visit a particular pharmacy.

Participants Preference for the Extended Services: Table 4 and Figure shows the preference of participants for the extended services. Question was asked to participants about the services which they would prefer to be provided by their local pharmacy. 52 (34.66%) participants said they would like blood glucose monitoring services to be provided by their pharmacy followed by Blood pressure monitoring (n=34, 22.66%). 28 (25.33%) participants favored for cholesterol monitoring followed by patient medication record keeping (10.66%) and reminder services for medicament (18.66%).

CONCLUSION

The image of community pharmacist is changing slowly but steadily from the mere dispenser of drugs to a healthcare professional. 57.33%

participants agreed that they think of their pharmacist as a healthcare provider, while 28% participant strongly agreed as for their pharmacist as a healthcare provider. 73.33% participants agreed that they trust their pharmacist with the prescription. 71.99% participants strongly agreed/agreed that their pharmacist can change the brand of drug prescribed by their physician. 50.66% participants agreed while 18.66% participants strongly agreed that if the pharmacist is prescribing a different brand of drug it's for their betterment. 70% participants agreed and 25.33% strongly agreed to follow the precautions/ instructions given by their pharmacist. Many participants had shown lot of trust in their pharmacist, and his knowledge as a healthcare provider especially for the minor ailments and lifestyle modification, but extra efforts are needed to improve the trust of participants for the specific ailments or clinical services. 48.66% participants agreed that they consult their pharmacist for minor ailments like headache, cough and cold etc. 77.33% participants strongly agreed/agreed that their pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe them medicines for minor ailments. 17% participants strongly agreed/ agreed that their pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe you medicine for specific major ailments. 55.33% agreed on the fact that their pharmacist can provide them the information regarding lifestyle diseases. 71.33% agreed to follow the advice given by their pharmacist to prevent lifestyle diseases. Blood Glucose Monitoring was the most preferred extended service which participants (34.66%) will like to be provided by their local community pharmacies. Community pharmacist should play a proactive and indispensable role in the healthcare services. They should be well equipped with the current knowledge to be able to guide, advice, counsel the patients for the correct usage of drugs. The community pharmacists can play a pivotal role in managing the lifestyle diseases as a counselor and service provider.

Table 1: Demographic Data of the Survey:

Particulars		Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	72
	Female	42	28
Education	10 th pass	22	14.66
	12 th pass	30	20
	Graduate	64	42.66
	Post graduate and above	34	22.66
Age	18-25	36	24
	26-35	39	26
	36-45	42	28
	45 and above	33	22
Occupation	Govt. job	22	14.66
	Private job	55	36.66
	Business	31	20.66
	Not working	42	28

Table 2. Participants Responses to Questions.

Questions	Patients/ Consumer Response n (%)			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your pharmacist is a health care provider.	42 (28%)	86 (57.33%)	15 (10%)	7 (4.66%)
You trust your pharmacist with your prescription.	35 (23.33%)	110 (73.33%)	5 (3.33%)	0 (0%)
Your pharmacist can change the brand of medicament prescribed by your physician	22 (14.66%)	86 (57.33%)	28 (18.66%)	14 (9.33%)
If a pharmacist is prescribing you a different brand of drug its for my betterment	28 (18.66%)	76 (50.66%)	24 (16%)	22 (14.66%)
If a pharmacist informs you about certain precautions /instructions while taking a medication you will follow him.	38 (25.33%)	105 (70%)	5 (3.33%)	2 (1.33%)
Can your pharmacist change your prescription according to your current medication?	12 (8%)	35 (23.33%)	46 (30.66%)	57 (38%)
You refer to your pharmacist for minor ailments like; headache, stomachache, fever, cough and cold.	57 (38%)	73 (48.66%)	11 (7.33%)	9 (6%)
Your pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe you medicine for minor ailments	37 (24.66%)	79 (52.66%)	20 (13.33%)	14 (9.33%)
Your pharmacist is knowledgeable enough to prescribe you medicine for specific major ailments like cancer etc.	9 (6%)	17 (11.33%)	86 (57.33%)	38 (25.33%)
Your pharmacist can provide you information regarding lifestyle diseases	29 (19.33%)	83 (55.33%)	17 (11.33%)	11 (7.33%)
You will follow the advice given by your pharmacist to prevent lifestyle diseases.	28 (18.66%)	107 (71.33%)	15 (10%)	0 (0%)

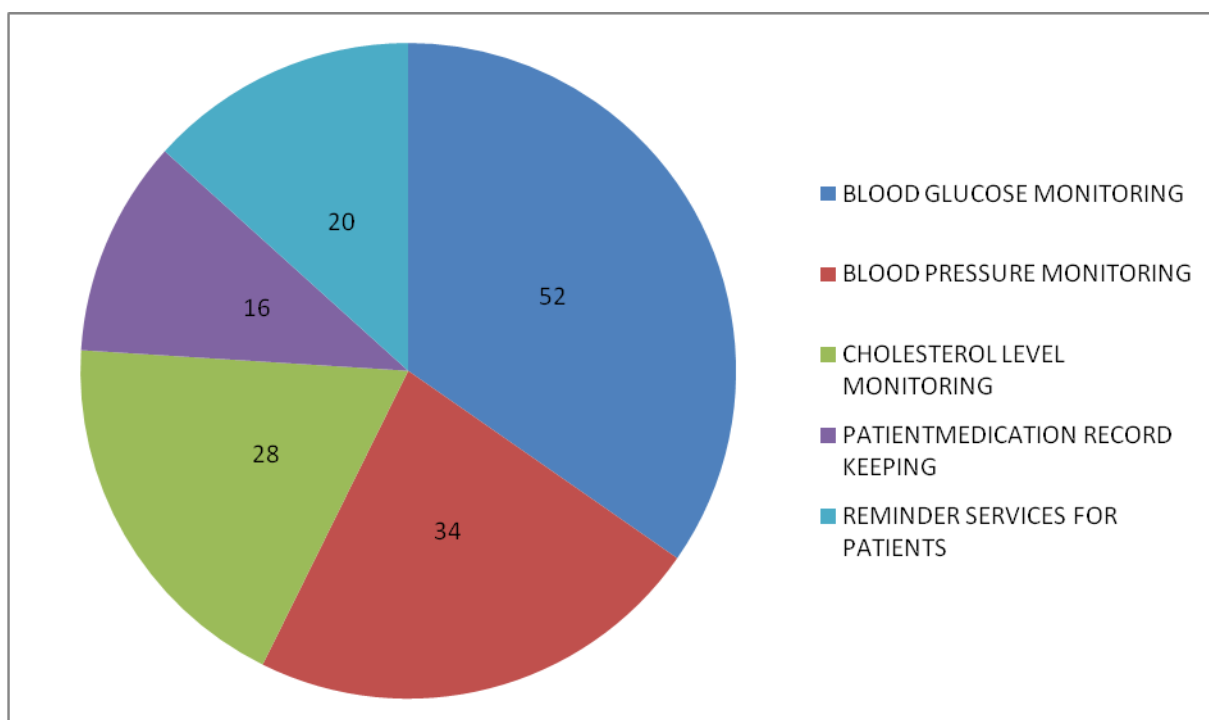
Table 3. Reason to Visit a Particular Pharmacy

Question	Response (n)	Percent (%)
You visit the local pharmacy for		
a. To get the prescribed medicaments	75	50
b. For drug related queries	17	11.33
c. Both a and b	58	38.66
You visit this pharmacy because		
a. Its near your house	49	32.66
b. You trust this pharmacy	33	22
c. Both a and b	58	38.66
d. No particular reason	10	6.66

Table 4: Participants Response for the Extended Services

Services	N	Percentage (%)
Blood glucose monitoring	52	34.66
Blood pressure monitoring	34	22.66
Cholesterol level monitoring	28	25.33
Patient medication record keeping.	16	10.66
Reminder services for medicaments	20	18.66

Figure 1: Pie chart showing the participants preference for the extended services



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