

ABSTRACT

The Dispensing Function of the Pharmacist In Health Care Delivery, from the Perspectives of the Consumers and Suppliers of Pharmaceuticals

Dahlia Nicole McDaniel

Behavioural research is urgently needed to improve the way that pharmaceuticals are prescribed, dispensed and used. The level of satisfaction of the providers and consumers of pharmaceuticals with several aspects of the delivery of pharmaceutical health care, may provide information about the standards of pharmaceutical services and its limitations. Such information may be the basis on which the functions of the pharmacist are expanded and improved.

The population studied was the pharmacy personnel in private retail pharmacies and public pharmacies, as well as the consumers that receive prescribed medications at these pharmacies.

The results revealed that the criteria of provision of additional information and counselling was most popular among consumers and suppliers in determining the efficiency of the pharmacist. A higher proportion of consumers in the public sector reportedly received this service all of the time, than consumers in private sector, and the majority of consumers and suppliers in the private and public sectors are satisfied with the amount of patient counselling that is given by pharmacists with regard to prescribed medications.

There is a significant association between the consumers' level of satisfaction with waiting time for prescription filling and the sector of the pharmacy. Most suppliers were satisfied with the waiting time of consumers at the pharmacies. However, most consumers and suppliers are satisfied with the dispensing function of the pharmacist in the provision of health care and there is no significant difference in the level of satisfaction among these groups in private and public sectors.

Convenient location of the pharmacy, the facilities or equipment available and their maintenance, and the courtesy and positive attitude of the pharmacist ranked high among the reasons that consumers visit the pharmacies that they do visit.

The vast majority of consumers and suppliers were satisfied with the dispensing role of the pharmacist in the provision of health care.

A prescription window designed specifically for patients that are interested in the availability and price of prescribed drugs, and patient counselling regarding proper use of drugs were the most popular services that consumers believe should be performed routinely by a pharmacist.

The suppliers of pharmaceuticals that work in the public sector appear to be more satisfied with management than those working in the private sector.

The main hindrances that are reportedly faced by suppliers in the public sector in functioning effectively are unavailability of medications, time limitations and inadequate continuing education.