

## **Healthcare Professionals' Perceptions towards the Role of Hospital Pharmacists in Sri Lanka: A Study Protocol**

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The pharmacy profession is uniquely positioned to ensure appropriate, safe, and cost-effective use of medicines. Healthcare professionals' accepted views on the role of pharmacists will increase the level of cooperation in the delivery of healthcare. Today, the role of pharmacists is rapidly expanding; however, the expanded role of pharmacists from the perspectives of healthcare professionals in Sri Lanka has not been explored. This mixed-method study will explore the perspectives of doctors, nurses and pharmacists toward the role of hospital pharmacists in Sri Lanka. This study will consist of a survey and an exploratory qualitative study. A descriptive cross-sectional survey will be conducted online to examine the perspectives of pharmacists who are working in government hospitals in Sri Lanka towards the role of pharmacists in hospitals. A validated questionnaire, consisting of 6 sections about personal information, interaction with clinicians, role of pharmacists in Sri Lankan healthcare, experience with healthcare professionals, perception of the current pharmacy curriculum and pharmacist involvement in medicines management will be used. In data analysis, descriptive statistics will be computed. The exploratory-descriptive qualitative study consists of two parts. In the first qualitative study, pharmacists who are working in government hospitals will participate in focus group interviews or semi-structured interviews. In the second qualitative study, nurses and doctors who are working in government hospitals will participate. Data will be collected until data saturation. Two separate interview guides for pharmacists and other healthcare professionals will be used. In data analysis, inductive thematic analysis will be conducted. The consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research checklist will be followed in reporting the findings. The findings of this study will hold significant potential for establishing standard guidelines that would align with the enhanced pharmacists' roles in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Doctors, Hospital pharmacists, Nurses, Pharmacists, Role of the pharmacists