

Investigating Perceptions Regarding Pharmaceutical Care Services among Registered Pharmacists in Central Province, Sri Lanka

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Pharmacy profession has witnessed a significant transition from preparation and dispensing of medications towards patient-centered care. Enhancing pharmaceutical care services is vital for achieving positive health benefits in patients. Hence the aim of this study was to assess the perceptions and perceived barriers of pharmaceutical care services among registered pharmacists in Central province, Sri Lanka. This was a cross-sectional study and the ethical approval was obtained prior to the data collection. Community and hospital pharmacists working in government or private sectors in the Central province, Sri Lanka were invited to participate in this study using a validated self-administered questionnaire. Out of the 217 registered pharmacists selected in the study, 136 pharmacists have completed the questionnaire with a response rate of 62.67%. Majority of the pharmacists (52%) were 30-39 years of age and most of them were female (60%). More than half of the participants (68%) had above 5 years' experience and 56% had higher educational qualifications. Majority of them (94%) had an overall, correct understanding of pharmaceutical care service concepts. Half of the participants had positive attitudes regarding pharmaceutical care services (50%) and majority (97.1%) responded job satisfaction while offering pharmaceutical care services. However, only a few respondents perceived that they carefully assess and obtain patient information (37.5%), formulate a patient-specific action plan (30.9%) and take a general approach to patient care (32.4%). Furthermore, participants reported four important perceived barriers for the implementation of pharmaceutical care practices, lack of time and skills, lack of external conditions, lack of full support from other health professionals and absence of information and economic incentive. In conclusion, findings of this study indicate that pharmacists in Sri Lanka barely practice pharmaceutical care as part of their routine work, although they have good understanding and positive attitudes towards providing pharmaceutical care services.

Keywords: Perception, Barriers, Pharmaceutical care, Pharmacists, Sri Lanka