

Abstract

The Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Pharmacy Professionals in the Provision of Nutrition Counselling and Diet-Related Advice [†]

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Abstract: Unhealthy diets are the number one risk factor for NCD-related morbidity and mortality. Interventions and services to change dietary behaviours and consumption patterns, and to improve health and nutrition literacy through education, are some fields in which health professionals can intervene to improve public health nutrition. Pharmacy professionals are in a unique position to play an integral role in educating people about modifiable behaviours such as dietary practices and healthy lifestyles. As universally accessible and ideally positioned healthcare providers, they can make an important contribution to improving public health nutrition and potentially impact the rising epidemic of obesity and NCDs through specific interventions, services, and education. Following the scoping review that explored the role of pharmacists in improving nutrition and diet-related NCDs, an online survey is being conducted to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of pharmacy professionals in the provision of nutrition counselling and diet-related advice in their routine practice. The survey explores the following areas: the nutrition knowledge of pharmacy professionals; nutrition advice in various conditions related to diet, such as weight management, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, dietary supplements, and micronutrient deficiencies; the provision of nutritional services and the level of importance of providing these services for improving population health and wellbeing; the nutrition topics on which patients ask advice (the frequency of asking) and their perceived level of confidence in giving advice on those topics; the use of national food-based dietary guidelines; their attitudes towards providing nutrition advice and counselling services; exploring their perceived roles and future ambitions; and training needs and further barriers and facilitators to improving nutrition services in the pharmacy setting. The survey is currently in the active data collection stage. Our preliminary findings indicate that the most common nutrition advice offered to patients is on diabetes (70%), followed by cardiovascular disease risk factors (64%), overweight and obesity (53%) and dietary supplementations (47%). Based on qualitative findings, it appears that there is a need for greater recognition of the significance of nutrition in pharmacy practice. Pharmacists expressed interest in training and resources on nutritional management and guidelines, as well as working hand-in-hand with dietitians.

Keywords: nutrition counselling; pharmacy practice; nutrition advice; nutrition care in pharmacy; community pharmacy; nutrition services in pharmacy; pharmacists' knowledge of nutrition; dietary advice



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