

Community Pharmacists' Patterns of Use, Knowledge, and Attitudes toward Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in Palestine: A cross-sectional Study

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Abstract :

Background and Objectives:

CAM utilization is dramatically increasing among patients either for acute illness management or for chronic conditions. This requires health practitioners in general and pharmacists in particular to have the required knowledge and information to advice their patient, answer their inquiries and to be proactive in health care process to ensure optimal therapy outputs and minimize both drug-drug and drug-herb interactions. This study was aimed to investigate community pharmacist's attitude, knowledge and practice toward different CAM modalities.

Methods:

Self-administered questionnaire was used to carry out the objectives of this study. The questionnaire was distributed in West Bank, North Palestine among 281 community pharmacists. It comprised of 5 sections: demographic factors, pharmacists practice, attitude, knowledge and part about CAM resources. The collected data from the returned questionnaire were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences program (SPSS) version 16.

Results:

A total of 281 community pharmacists were interviewed, the majority were males 149 (53.0%), and 132 (47.0%) were females. The highest percent of pharmacists (39.9%) were between the ages of [20-29] years-old. Recommendations of CAM products were common among community pharmacists. Exercises (84.0%) and food supplements (82.6%) composed the highest frequencies of recommendations. B12 had the highest percentage of supplements prescribed in the last year. The median knowledge score was 5.00 of 8.00 and the median attitude score was 4.00 of 7.00. There was a significant difference in knowledge score values between pharmacists according to age, educational level, university of graduation, experience, the city where the pharmacy located and the location of the pharmacy weather it is in city, village or camp. Whereas, attitude score values have no significant difference between the socio-demographic groups. Conclusion: The use of CAM among pharmacists is widespread and prevalent. Although their knowledge score were fair to average. They still need more pharmacy education and training in order to be more qualified to provide better pharmaceutical care and improving their patient's outcome.

Key Words:

CAM, pharmacists, knowledge, attitude, practice, information sources, Palestine.

