

What do Patients want to be counseled about by the Pharmacist?

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Abstract:

Introduction:

Pharmacist role has evolved over the years to include dispensing of medications, and also patient counseling. It is an important process by which pharmacists provide valuable information to the patients about their medications, diseases, or other related issues. This study was designed to assess the magnitude of patient counseling practice in Palestine.

Methods:

this is a cross-sectional, questionnaire-based study. It included a convenient sample of 500 participant of those attending community pharmacies. After obtaining participants approval, they were handed the questionnaire to fill. It is composed of four sections: demographics, issues that participants wanted to be counseled about regarding their medications, issues to be counseled about regarding the diseases, and reasons why counseling was not done if that was the case. Results were analyzed via SPSS version 21.

Results:

a total of 500 participants filled the questionnaire, with a response rate of 86%. Most (41.2%) were in the age group of 20-29 years old with an average age of 31.3 ± 15.5 years, 55.6% were females, and about half (48.4%) had an income between 2000-5000 New Israeli Shekel (NIS) (approximately 540-1351\$). More than half (58.2%) of participants lived in villages, were mainly healthy with only 17.4% having chronic diseases, and 69.4% had a bachelor degree. Main points that participants would like to know include how to use their medications (93.6%), therapeutic uses (92.6%), whether the medication should be taken before or after meal (91.6%), routes of administration (91.4%), among many others. Regarding their diseases, participants were curious about many issues such as if their case was contagious (84.2%), possible exacerbations (83.2%), how long will the disease last (82.6%), and others. Upon inquiry of why participants did not receive counseling previously, the reasons were many such as they wanted to get their information from the physician (60%), had their own reasons that they did not want to

declare (55.6), lack of time (31%), or did not trust the pharmacists (22.4%). Chi square was used to test for significant differences among participants based on their demographics, few significant differences were found such as gender differences in the desire to know about side effects ($p=0.05$) and dose ($p=0.04$); educational level in wanting to know about the dose ($p=0.02$), duration of therapy ($p=0.05$), drug-drug interaction ($p=0.02$), disease exacerbations ($p=0.02$), mode of disease transmission ($p= 0.009$), and in not trusting the pharmacists ($p= 0.02$).

Conclusion and recommendations:

based on this study, most participants were eager to receive counseling from the pharmacists on issues related to their medications or diseases. Pharmacists are encouraged to provide the required counseling in a private area in the community pharmacies. Colleges of pharmacy in Palestine are encouraged to offer courses that teach counseling and communications skills to its students.