

Assessing the Role of Pharmacists in Patient Centered Care Approach

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ABSTRACT

This survey-based research aims to estimate the level of understanding and awareness among working pharmacists regarding their contributions for stepping out from his product oriented approach to healthier patient centered care approach. Currently the society is going through substantial changes in its health care needs and provision. In this changing scenario and need of time the pharmacist himself is the backbone of the healthcare system. All the way through this structured questionnaire, data was collected on pharmacists' roles, responsibilities, perceptions, and suggestions for enhancing their involvement in healthcare teams. The findings offer valuable insights into areas for improvement and strategies to better integrate pharmacists into the overall healthcare system.

Keywords: Pharmacists, Patient Oriented Approach, Integrated Healthcare, Collaboration, Survey Research

1. INTRODUCTION

The pharmacist's role in health systems is crucial in ensuring a product focus to a patient-centered care approach ensuring the safe and effective use of medications and achieving overall health outcomes.

The extent of patient-centred care includes all the cognitive functions of counseling, providing drug information and monitoring drug therapy, as well as technical aspects of pharmaceutical services, including medicines supply management.

Within integrated healthcare settings pharmacy practice should be handled and delivered with high standards of pharmaceutical care and instruction are available for preceptors for voluntarily active engagement in the delivery of high-quality pharmaceutical care, and spend a majority of their time providing pharmaceutical care in their facility.

This study aims to address this gap by probing pharmacists' perspectives on their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for integration of pharmaceutical services

Hospital and community pharmacist has faced the Challenges during pandemic which demonstrated the need of high quality pharmaceutical care for achievement of overall health outcomes and this is not possible without voluntary involvement of practicing pharmacist. The challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic are

- Shortage of safety measures
- Difficulty in adequate medication management

- Shortness of pharmacy manpower
- Non-existent or less priority to pharmaceutical care
- Poor security to Paramedical health care professionals

Due consideration shall be given where idyllic pharmacist should be easily and directly accessible to public for information & counseling. He is the link between the prescriber and the patient.

Most frequently due to fear of overheard by others the patient feels hesitation & discomfort to discuss problems or queries clearly with Physician. Pharmacist satisfies the patients need by answering their doubts, question /queries.

Pharmacist plays an important role in areas such as:

- Patient counseling
- chronic disease management
- Medication management
- Storage and distribution of drugs.
- Clinical pharmacy
- Hospital pharmacy
- Patient education

Pharmacist can contribute in for strengthen the healthcare systems by giving extraordinary contribution in various pharmaceutical services as listed below

1. Medication Management
2. Chronic Disease Management
3. Patient Education
4. Collaborative Care
5. Pharmacists as medical experts
6. Case studies Illustration Impact
7. Collaborative care
8. Immunizations and Preventive care services
9. Advancement in technology
10. Pharmacy education
11. Tele pharmacy (AI)

2. METHODS AND MATERIALS:

The objective of present study is to collect the information for understanding and awareness level to which pharmacists actively contribute to patient-centered care and collaborate with other healthcare professionals in integrated healthcare settings.

A survey questionnaire is prepared with the objective to gather insights from hospital pharmacist, clinical pharmacist, and community pharmacist. The survey questionnaire was distributed among working pharmacists, focusing on their years of experience, current roles, primary responsibilities, perceived contributions to patient outcomes, and suggestions for enhancing their role in integrated healthcare facilities. The data collected were analyzed to identify trends, patterns, and areas of consensus or divergence among respondents.

The survey questionnaire was distributed in the form of Google form in the form of multiple choice questions as well as the option for writing their comments (wherever applicable) was available. The survey questions were as follows

The link of the Google form is <https://forms.gle/7DiH76xsrgSKUqNp8>

Survey questions

2.1 Personal and Demographic information

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Years of Experience as a Pharmacist
- Name of Presently Working Organization
- Place
- District
- State

2.2 Questionnaire

1. What is your current role in the healthcare system?
 - a) Hospital inpatient pharmacist
 - b) Independent community pharmacy
 - c) Clinical pharmacist
 - d) Hospital outpatient pharmacy
 - e) Chain community pharmacy
 - f) Other (Please Specify)
2. Which of the following best describes the primary responsibility of a pharmacist in an integrated healthcare facility?
 - a) Dispensing medications
 - b) Patient counseling on medication use
 - c) Collaborating with healthcare teams
 - d) Medication therapy management
3. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacist's in
 - a) Integrated Healthcare Facilities?
 - b) Increased Interprofessional Training
 - c) Recognition of Pharmacist Contributions
 - d) Integration of Technology In Pharmacy Practice
 - e) All of The Above
4. In addition to dispensing medications, what other responsibilities do you believe are important for a community in an integrated healthcare setting?
 - a) Involvement in national immunizations and vaccinations campaigns
 - b) Providing health screenings
 - c) Medication management
 - d) All of the above
5. In your opinion, how does the accessibility of pharmacists contribute to better patient outcomes in an integrated healthcare facility?
 - a) No contribution
 - b) Minimal contribution
 - c) Moderate contribution
 - d) Significant contribution

6. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare facilities?

- a) Increased collaboration with healthcare teams
- b) Expanded scope of practice
- c) Technology integration in community pharmacy
- d) All of the above

7. In your opinion, what specific actions can healthcare organizations take to better integrate pharmacists into the overall healthcare team?

- a) Establishing clear communication channels
- b) Providing additional training opportunities
- c) Recognizing and rewarding pharmacist contributions
- d) Other (please specify)

8. How do you typically stay updated on the latest advancements and best practices relevant to your role as a pharmacist in an integrated healthcare setting?

- a) Continuing education courses
- b) Professional conferences
- c) Online webinars and resources
- d) Peer-reviewed journals
- e) Leaflets/Literature with Medical Representatives
- f) Other (Please Specify)

9. To what extent do you involve patients in their own care, emphasizing medication adherence and lifestyle modifications?

- a) Extensively
- b) Somewhat
- c) Moderately
- d) Not at all
- e) Other:

10. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare facilities?

- a. Increased inter professional training
- b. Recognition of pharmacist contributions
- c. Integration of technology in pharmacy practice
- d. All of the above

3. RESULT and DISCUSSION

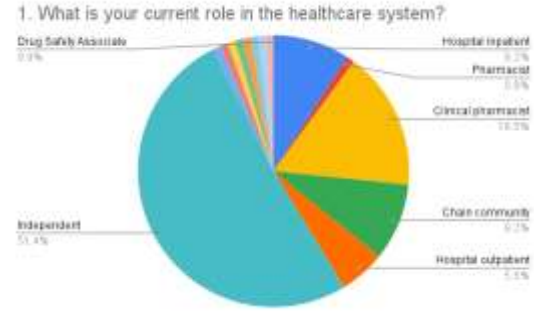
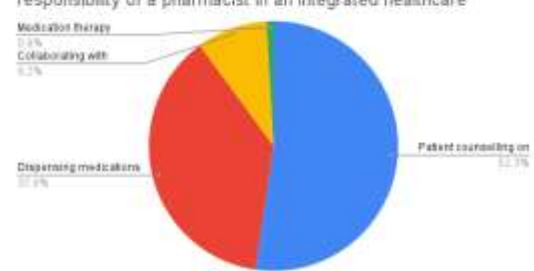
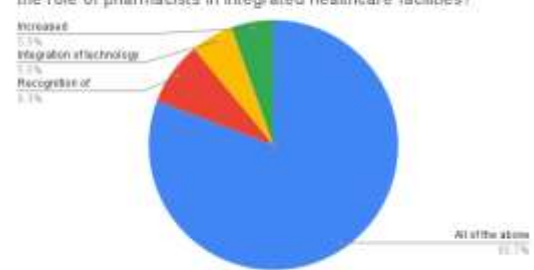
The survey garnered responses from 105 pharmacists across various healthcare settings ranging age group from 19 to 49 years and the experience is from fresher's to 40 years. Results indicated that the majority of pharmacists were involved in roles such as hospital inpatient pharmacy, clinical pharmacy, and community pharmacy. The findings underscored the need for increased inter professional training, recognition of pharmacist contributions, and integration of technology in pharmacy practice to enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare settings. Moreover, respondents highlighted the importance of involving patients in their care and suggested strategies for better integration of pharmacists within healthcare teams. While dispensing medications remained a primary responsibility,

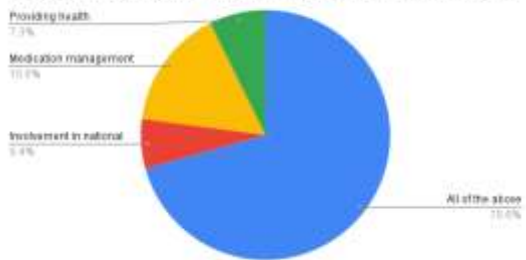
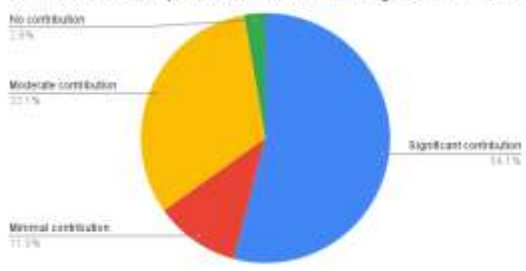
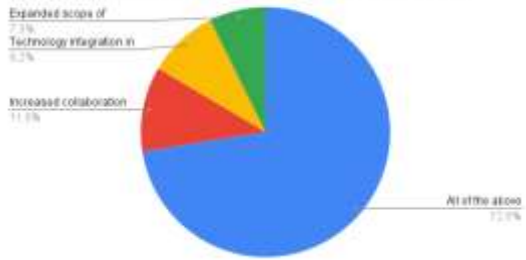
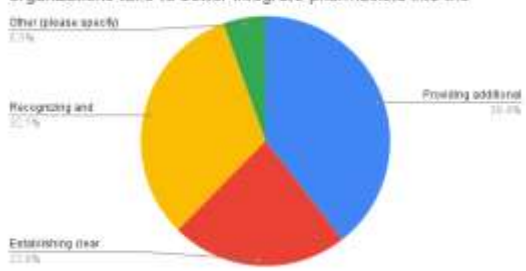
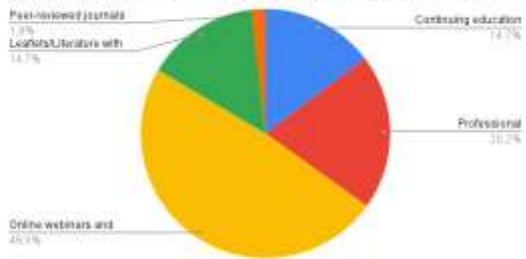
there was a growing recognition of the importance of patient counseling, collaboration with healthcare teams, and medication therapy management.

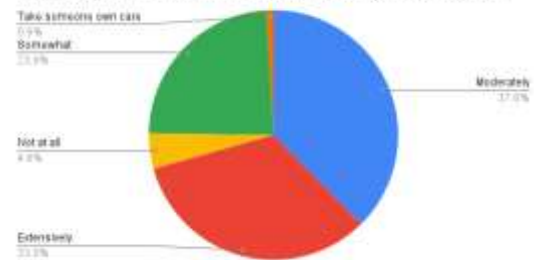
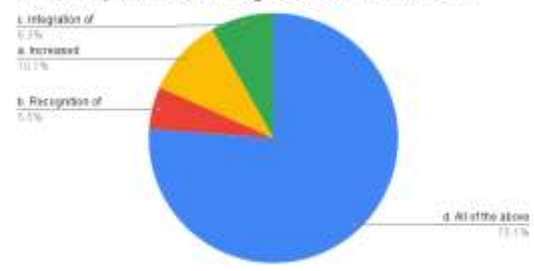
3.1 The findings of the survey are as follows:

In this study, we delved into the diverse roles and contributions of pharmacists within the integrated healthcare system, focusing on various aspects such as their responsibilities, patient outcomes, integration challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

Table 1 Result and Discussion

Q. No.	Responses for the Pharmacist	Interpretation
1.	<p>1. What is your current role in the healthcare system?</p> 	<p>Current Roles in health care settings – The data collected for role of pharmacist in healthcare system will help us to understand the pharmacist direct interaction with users of healthcare system. Notably, the majority of respondents identified as independent pharmacists (51.4%), highlighting the prevalence of entrepreneurial roles within the pharmacy domain. Clinical pharmacists (16.5%) and hospital pharmacists (9.2%) also represented significant portions, emphasizing the varied settings in which pharmacists operate.</p>
2.	<p>2. Which of the following best describes the primary responsibility of a pharmacist in an integrated healthcare</p> 	<p>Primary Responsibilities and Integration: - While medication counseling (52.3%) and patient counseling (52.3%) were identified as primary responsibilities, collaborating with the healthcare team (9.2%) and dispensing medications (37.6%) were also recognized. This underscores the collaborative nature of modern healthcare delivery and the pivotal role pharmacists play in interdisciplinary teams.</p>
3.	<p>3. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare facilities?</p> 	<p>Enhancing the Role of Pharmacists: - Respondents overwhelmingly supported initiatives to enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare. Suggestions ranged from increased integration of technology (80.7%) to recognizing pharmacist contributions (32.1%) and providing additional training opportunities (39.4%). These insights underscore the potential for systemic improvements to empower pharmacists and optimize patient care outcomes.</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>4. In addition to dispensing medications, what other responsibilities do you believe are important for a community in</p> 	<p>Expanded Responsibilities: - Pharmacists are increasingly taking on expanded responsibilities beyond medication dispensing. The overwhelming majority (70.6%) recognized the importance of pharmacists engaging in providing health services, medication management, and national involvement, highlighting the multifaceted nature of their role in promoting holistic healthcare.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>5. In your opinion, how does the accessibility of pharmacists contribute to better patient outcomes in an integrated healthcare</p> 	<p>Accessibility and Patient Outcomes: - The accessibility of pharmacists emerged as a crucial factor influencing patient outcomes. A substantial 54.1% of respondents acknowledged the significant contribution of pharmacist accessibility to improved patient outcomes, underlining the pivotal role pharmacists play in patient care beyond medication dispensing.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>6. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare facilities?</p> 	<p>Pharmacist role in integrated healthcare settings responses were collected to identify pharmacist awareness for providing services based on team work, technology uses and additional service provider aspect. Majority of Pharmacist about 72.5% understand that collectively role of pharmacist can be enhanced.</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>7. In your opinion, what specific actions can healthcare organizations take to better integrate pharmacists into the</p> 	<p>Integration Strategies: - Healthcare organizations can facilitate better integration of pharmacists through various strategies. These include establishing clear communication channels (22.9%), recognizing and rewarding pharmacist contributions (32.1%), and providing additional training opportunities (39.4%). These actions can foster a collaborative environment conducive to optimal patient care outcomes.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>8. How do you typically stay updated on the latest advancements and best practices relevant to your role as a</p> 	<p>Pharmacists lifelong learning skills predominantly rely on online resources and webinars (48.6%) for staying updated on advancements and best practices. Professional conferences (20.2%) and continuing education courses (14.7%) also play significant roles in knowledge acquisition, highlighting the dynamic nature of pharmacy practice.</p>

<p>9.</p>	<p>9. To what extent do you involve patients in their own care, emphasizing medication adherence and lifestyle modifications?</p> 	<p>Patient Involvement:-Involving patients in their care process, particularly regarding medication adherence and lifestyle modifications, emerged as a significant aspect. While a substantial 33.0% reported extensive involvement, there is room for improvement in encouraging patient participation across the spectrum of care.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p>10. What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the role of pharmacists in integrated healthcare facilities?</p> 	<p>The question was framed to understand the respondent's active awareness for cross checking responses accuracy. Suggestions ranged from increased integration of technology (8.3%) to recognizing pharmacist contributions (5.5%) and providing additional training opportunities (10.1%) and the majority (76.1%) agrees that collectively we can achieve the goals of enhancing role of pharmacist in healthcare settings</p>

4. CONCLUSION

This survey aimed to evaluate the participation of pharmacists in patient-centered care and their collaboration within integrated healthcare settings. The survey, distributed to hospital, clinical, and community pharmacists, provided insights into their roles, responsibilities, and impact on achieving patients therapeutic outcomes. This provides valuable insights into the current background of pharmacist involvement in patient-centered care within integrated healthcare settings.

Study revealed that pharmacists are highly engaged in patient care but go through varying levels of collaboration and integration challenges with other healthcare professionals. Respondents identified both strengths and areas for improvement, including the need for better communication and enhanced interprofessional training and expertise sharing. Overall, pharmacists' contributions are significant, but addressing identified barriers can further optimize their role in integrated healthcare teams and improve patient outcomes.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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