

COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS' PERSPECTIVES ON MANAGING DRUG-RELATED PROBLEMS IN AUSTRIA: A FOCUS GROUP STUDY

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Background:

The integration of clinical practice in community pharmacy is associated with challenges that are influenced by factors including the utilisation of resources, dynamics of collaboration and pharmacists' professional identity. An exploration of these challenges could facilitate the development of sustainable clinical pharmacy practice in Austria.

Aim:

The aim of this study was to examine the perspectives of Austrian community pharmacists in the context of managing drug-related problems and to explore influences on their behaviour.

Method:

Four focus groups were undertaken with 23 Austrian community pharmacists. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling. A moderator guided the discussion on their experiences, opinions, and challenges regarding management of drug-related problems, and potential for change. Focus groups were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed by two independent researchers using the Theoretical Domain Framework for coding.

AUSTRIA



POPULATION
9,147,422



PHARMACISTS
6,341



COMMUNITY PHARMACIES
1415

FOCUS GROUPS: 23 pharmacists



WORK EXPERIENCE

0-4 years: 5
5-9 Years: 2
10-14 years: 1
15-20 years: 8
More than 20 years: 7



Collaboration Difficulties
alienation, ability, intergroup conflict



Technological Barriers
barriers, practice, person x environment interaction



Group Identity
professional role, perceived competence



Current Practice
critical incidents, empowerment



Legal Boundaries
incentives, sanctions, stages of change



Technological Solutions
knowledge of task environment, characteristics of outcome expectations



Human Resources
knowledge, competence, skills



Emotional Resources
beliefs, stability of intentions, professional confidence

Results:

Pharmacists highlighted their proactive stance in improving their contribution to patient care. Participants articulated barriers to collaboration with physicians, allied health professionals and patients, as well as technological barriers within the pharmacy environment. The theme of readiness for clinical practice focused on group identity, the evolution of the professional role of the Austrian pharmacist, the alignment of current practice with the principles of clinical pharmacy, and pharmacists' ambivalent feelings about current legal boundaries. On the theme of leveraging resources, participants emphasised the importance of technological solutions as well as human and emotional resources in the management of drug-related problems.

Conclusion:

The results of this study highlight the complexity of integrating clinical pharmacy into community pharmacy settings. Technological resources, changing role identity and improved collaboration are key factors in managing drug related problems in community pharmacies. By developing a deeper understanding of daily practice, new areas for improvement were identified for sustainable clinical practice in Austria.

References/Acknowledgments:

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