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Patients' experiences of a clinical pharmacist integrated into a General Practice setting

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Patients' experiences of a clinical pharmacist integrated into a General Practice setting

Abstract

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Patients' experiences of a clinical pharmacist integrated into a General Practice setting

2015 PHC RESEARCH CONFERENCE: PAPER ABSTRACT

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Organisation
University of Wollongong, Woonona Medical Practice, Illawarra and Southern Practice Research Network

Aims & rationale
In the Australian primary care setting, pharmacists are not traditionally incorporated into the healthcare team. Patients are accustomed to pharmacists in the hospital or community pharmacy setting. A five-month study provided the opportunity for a pharmacist to be integrated into the routine management of patients receiving anticoagulants. The aim of this research was to investigate the attitudes and acceptability by patients of a pharmacist as a member of the primary healthcare team.

Methods
Anonymous surveys were given to patients involved in the pilot project to gauge their attitudes to having the pharmacist engaged in their care, access to their medical histories and advising on medication management. Free-text and additional comments were encouraged. Thematic analysis of the surveys was performed.

Findings
The response rate was 83%. Ninety-five percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had increased knowledge and confidence in discussing their medicines as a result of the pharmacist consultations; knew to take care with new or purchased over-the-counter medicines and to alert their clinicians of intercurrent illnesses. Thematic analysis of the free-text responses provided by 52% of participants identified two roles of the pharmacist: as an intermediary and an educator. Positive attitudes towards the pharmacist and the professionalism of the pharmacist were additional emergent themes.

Relevance to policy, research and/or practice needs
The placement of pharmacists in general practice is presently being deliberated by professional pharmacy and medical organisations. This study provides evidence for
the acceptability of such a role, based on actual patient experiences.

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Citation

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Research study

Aim
To pilot the placement of a clinical pharmacist within an integrated anticoagulant clinic in a general practice setting and to:
• qualitatively evaluate the acceptability of the pharmacist and barriers to the placement, from the viewpoint of:
  – GPs and Practice Nurses
  – patients;
• quantitatively compare pre and post outcomes
• explore additional benefits for participants

Method
Setting:
A busy northern suburbs General Practice in Illawarra
Oral anticoagulants

For:
• atrial fibrillation;
• treatment or prophylaxis against venous-thromboembolism; or
• thrombophilias; and

...taking WARFARIN

Non vitamin K-antagonist oral anticoagulants (NOACs)
• apixaban - Eliquis™
• dabigatran - Pradaxa™
• rivaroxaban - Xarelto™

Evaluation tool
Anonymous survey
Patient survey questions

- About them
- About their consultations / interactions with the pharmacist during the study
- Their views / reflections on the role in management of their medicines of:
  - the study pharmacist
  - any pharmacist

Free-text questions were asked and additional comments encouraged.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Possible patient participants
62

Surveys
48

Responses from
40

• Frail (7)
• In hospital (2)
• Grey nomads (2)
• Illiterate (1)
• Anticoagulant ceased (2)

Anticoagulant study - patient cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anticoagulant study - patient cohort</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age (years)</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% over 70 years of age</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticoagulant indication</td>
<td>Atrial Fibrillation 69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Knowledge and intent

95% agreed or strongly agreed they...........
- knew more about their anticoagulant;
- felt confident talking to the pharmacist about their medicines
Knowledge & intent

95% now knew to inform the GP...

- if new or changed complementary (CAM) or over-the-counter medicines (OTC)
- To inform the GP if they had recently been unwell

87% were more likely to alert GP or nurse re missed medicines

“I don’t need to take extra supplements like vitamin C, fish oil, glucosamine as long as I keep a balanced diet”

“I have to be careful what I buy from the chemist, checking with the doctor first”

....“the effect herbs and herbal medication used in conjunction with warfarin”

Pharmacist as member of team

97% comfortable with pharmacist....

- accessing medical notes
- discussing their medicines & progress with GP & practice nurse

Major themes

The pharmacist’s role as an
- intermediary
- educator

’Shop pharmacists don’t always have time to discuss your medicines and if you have any questions (..here..) they can be discussed with the doctor there in front of you and treated straight away.’

‘It is nice to have someone ...to go to here and have advice about my health needs’

• The pharmacist as a professional
• The patients’ positive attitude toward the pharmacist
Educator...

- Supplements
- Diet and alcohol

“Eat green vegetables regularly”
“Always tell doctor if the diet has changed”
- Anticoagulants and management

‘Easier to understand reasons for taking warfarin’
‘It (dabigatran) must be declared before oral or any other surgery’
- Other medications

The pharmacist...

‘shows concern to what I am doing with the warfarin to stay on track and keep focussed’
‘very helpful in all aspects of my medications and always very professional in her attitude and pleasant manner’
‘is caring and focussed pharmacist who makes you feel at ease, and a person to be trusted’

Attitudes to project pharmacist

‘was always pleasant & friendly’

‘Enjoyed working with her.’

‘Thank you for your involvement in my health – has been very helpful’

‘I have complete faith in decisions made by my doctors in prescribing medicines, yet appreciate her assistance in the use of warfarin’

Attitudes to pharmacists in general practice

- ‘I believe having a pharmacist available gives confidence to patients being treated’
- ‘I would be concerned if pharmacists in the future were to “push” a certain medication’
- ‘Pharmacists should advise from a pharmacy and not a doctor’s surgery’

Comparisons

- 97% of participant patients agreed to having pharmacist as member of the healthcare team – access to medical notes and discussions

- 37% of patients surveyed agreed to pharmacists having access to medical files

Freeman et al, 2012
O. Henry - author and pharmacist

Acknowledgements

GPs and staff of Woonona Medical Practice

People receiving oral anticoagulants

Pharmacy Council of NSW