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Practical consideration on strengthening the role of community pharmacists in improving compliance among type-2 diabetes mellitus patients

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Introduction & Aim: Drug regimen compliance is a significant barrier to treatment efficacy and it has greater impact on morbidity, mortality and quality of life in diabetic patients. Non-compliance may be related to patient demographics, the complexity of the drug regimen, dosage frequency, adverse effects, or some combination of these. Despite all the best intention and efforts on the part of the healthcare professionals, those outcomes might not be achievable if the patients are non-compliant to the drug regimen. However, the community pharmacist's role in improving compliance among type-2 diabetes patients has not been thoroughly studied in India. The purpose of the study is to describe the current scenario and to project the need of transformation in community pharmacist's role in patients counseling to improve the health status of type-2 diabetes patients.

Method: This was a cross-sectional descriptive study design using convenience sampling. 197 community pharmacists and 240 patients were participated throughout Tamil Nadu, South India from September 2016 to January 2017. Data collected includes demographic details, knowledge, attitude and practice among patients and community pharmacists. A standard knowledge and practice assessment questionnaire tool was pilot tested and adopted.

Findings: Significant adherence predictors have been identified from the patient survey and were correlated with known risk-factors. Due to lack of knowledge, the confidence level was very poor in patient counseling and barriers for poor knowledge include lack of time, continuing education, technology information, low self interest among the community pharmacists.

Conclusion: The standard effective and interactive continuing community pharmacy education program on diabetes and prevention increased the knowledge and confidence of pharmacists significantly. As advocated by the World Health Organization and the international pharmaceutical federation, pharmacists can help patients to get access to health care, and also to maximize the potential benefit of the medicines. Therefore, pharmacists are being called on to expand their role from drug seller to adherence counselor and advisor on preventing the future diabetes prevalence

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