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Determining what services the patient expects from a community or hospital pharmacist, and what they actually get from the pharmacist

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To identify the gaps between patients' expectations and what they actually get from a community or hospital pharmacist. To determine what patients, perceive to be the role of the pharmacist and their satisfaction of the services they receive from pharmacists.

Methods: A prospective cross-sectional quantitative study was undertaken. A suitable questionnaire was developed for the survey from previous research. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire was tested. The study focussed on patient counselling. The questionnaire gauged the opinions of patients as to what they expect from a pharmacist and what they actually got from the pharmacist. Probability values (p-values) were calculated to determine if there was significant difference.

Results: A total of 137 questionnaires were completed in full by patients. The data was analysed using Stata statistical software. The majority (53%) of the patients who participated in the study were male and approximately 70% of the patients were between the ages of 30 to 49 years. The study found significant difference (p=0.000231) between patients' expectations and what they actually got from the pharmacists. The responses of patients from the public hospital pharmacies and private hospital pharmacies differed significantly (p=0.0361). Most of the patients in the private hospital pharmacies had higher expectations and received better service than patients who received services from the public hospital pharmacies. There was no significant difference in the experience of patients in private hospital and retail pharmacies (p=0.6685). A p-value of 0.1925 was obtained when comparing retail/community pharmacies with public hospital pharmacies implying that there was no significant difference in the responses between the retail/community pharmacies and public hospital pharmacies. Overall, 70.8% of the patients were satisfied with the service they received. Almost 90% (87.6 %) of the patients view pharmacist as not only a supplier of prescription medicines but as a health professional who is equipped with knowledge to provide counselling on the appropriate use of medicine and other health matters.

Conclusion: The study found a significant difference between patients' expectations and what they actually get from the pharmacist. Patients are aware of the professional roles and responsibilities of community and hospital pharmacists. While the majority of the patients were satisfied with the service they received, there was a significant number of patients felt that the service they received was poor. Lack or inadequate counselling of patients by pharmacists is still a challenge.