

Community Pharmacists as Frontline Healthcare Providers: Expanding Roles in Patient Counseling and Public Health

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Abstract:

In recent years, the role of community pharmacists has significantly evolved beyond traditional medication dispensing. Especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, pharmacists emerged as accessible and trusted healthcare professionals contributing to public health, chronic disease management, and rational drug use. This study explores the expanding role of community pharmacists in providing patient-centered services such as medication counseling, vaccination support, point-of-care testing, and health education.

Based on observational data and national pharmacy practice trends, the paper highlights how pharmacists in community settings are increasingly involved in advising on over-the-counter (OTC) therapies, managing minor ailments, and referring patients to appropriate healthcare services when necessary. Furthermore, the integration of digital health tools and electronic prescription systems has empowered pharmacists to improve medication adherence and optimize therapy outcomes.

The presentation advocates for further recognition of pharmacists as primary healthcare providers and discusses potential policy improvements to enhance their contribution to public health.

Keywords:

Community Pharmacy, OTC Medicines, Patient Counseling, Primary Care, Public Health.