

DESIGNING PHARMACY SERVICES BASED ON PATIENT PREFERENCES: A PROACTIVE APPROACH

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Purpose: Previous research has shown that if patients do not perceive that interacting with their pharmacist is beneficial to their health, they are unlikely to participate in newly created pharmacy-based services. Additional research has also reported that consumer perceptions of pharmaceutical services need to be measured in order to maximize marketing strategies and satisfy customer wants and needs. The purpose of this study is to identify pharmacy-based services, especially those beyond traditional dispensing activities, that are desired among varying patient populations for use in evaluation and quality improvement of current pharmaceutical services.

Methods: An anonymous, self-administered survey was created by the principal study investigator to assess the perceived importance of 28 individual community pharmacy services, identification of the top three most important services, utilization frequency of Kroger grocery store/Kroger pharmacy, preferred methods for advertising such services, as well as demographics of study participants. The surveys were distributed by the principal study investigator to Kroger grocery store patrons at eight different locations within central Ohio over a one-month period. Each survey event was approximately four hours in length.

Results: 163 surveys were completed at the end of the data collection period. Data are being analyzed to determine what pharmacy-based services are desired in community pharmacies based on study participant demographics. Study investigators will also utilize the information to provide input for future marketing and for strategic planning associated with expansion and modification of current services in community pharmacies.

Conclusion: This study intends to provide innovative pharmacy practitioners with a range of patient preferred services that could be incorporated into community pharmacies. Implications for this include expanding current pharmacy-based services, initiating new services, and educating patients about the expanded role of pharmacists and their ability to offer more than traditional dispensing services. The profession must be mindful in assuring that pharmacy services offered complement patient interest. Acknowledging this concept prior to instituting new or updated services will potentially lead to increased value and enhanced utilization rates.

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Supported by a 2005 American Pharmacists Association Incentive Grant.