

Community pharmacy as a health hub: meeting the needs of people with chronic conditions

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Introduction. Pharmacies are frequently visited by people with chronic conditions. There is limited information from the perspective of Australian consumer orientated and professional organisations of consumer needs within the context of community pharmacy.

Aim. To explore the viewpoints of health professional organisations, consumer groups and advocates with respect to the role of community pharmacy in supporting consumers/carers with long term condition(s).

Methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 consumer and healthcare stakeholders between January-March 2012; representation was purposively sought from health priority areas defined by the Australian Government. Interviews were conducted face-to-face across the greater Brisbane area and by telephone for others. Interviews were analysed via thematic analysis.

Results. Stakeholders recognised a need for community pharmacy to become a “one-stop” healthcare destination to enable consumers to manage their medications and navigate the health system. Pharmacists were identified as having a “neutral” position and could further develop their health advocacy role. As consumers may not be aware of pharmacists breadth of expertise an improvement and extension of their current role was emphasised.

Discussion. There was a strong perception that community pharmacy practice should shift towards a more patient-centred approach as a health hub destination. This study adds support for pharmacists to collaborate further with consumer support organisations and other health providers to extend their role in chronic illness management.

The Australian Government DOHA (2006). National Chronic Disease Strategy.

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