

Pharmacy technicians contribute to counselling and handling drug-related problems at community pharmacies

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Background Pharmacy technicians are the largest group of staff at Danish community pharmacies. They play a vital role in counselling patients on prescription medication, over-the-counter (OTC) medication and non-medical products. This is the first study carried out to specifically analyse how pharmacy technicians contribute to counselling.

Purpose The objective was to map the pharmacy technicians' counselling activities regarding prescription medication, OTC medication and personal care products at community pharmacies and to analyse how they handle drug-related problems (DRP).

Method 76 pharmacy technicians from 38 community pharmacies were included from all Danish regions. The participating pharmacy technicians registered data on all their patient visits to the community pharmacies for five days over a four-week period between January and March 2019. At the beginning of the study period, the pharmacy technicians were introduced to the study in a webinar. They received training on registration consisting of an instruction and eight cases, that they had to solve before starting registration. During the study period the research group held two Q&A webinars and could further be contacted for support.

Findings Data on a total of 17,692 patients was registered. DRPs were identified for 17.8% (n=1,917) of patients requesting prescription medication, 57.8% of whom received counselling. 2.4% (n=262) got their medication after their prescription had been corrected; for 7.1% (n=761) the medication was not handed over due to DRPs. DRPs were identified for 12.7% (n=352) of patients requesting only OTC medication or presenting a symptom. 46.3% (n=163) requests were solved, 20.5% (n=72) were partly solved, 13.1% (n=46) were not solved and 20.2% (n=71) were registered as 'don't know' or lacking. 25.2% of patients who received counselling saved a visit to their General Practitioner (GP). More results will be presented at the conference.

Conclusion Pharmacy technicians contribute to medication safety by counselling patients and handling DRPs. 'Drug/product use' was the most frequent subject used in counselling the total population and in all subgroups.