

Pharmacists? and physicians? attitudes about collaborative practice: challenges and opportunities for improving health outcomes in patients

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Background Patient care is rarely achievable by a single clinician and more often it needs collaboration of several experts. Generally, collaborative cooperation can be explained as joint work to achieve the same goal defined as ?information sharing and mutual cooperation in order to improve the delivery of health care to each individual patient.?

Purpose The main aim of the study was to reveal and analyze pharmacists? and physicians? experiences and attitudes related to its? collaborative practice, including professional roles and barriers.

Method On-line questionnaire developed in line with the purpose of the study served as a data source. Questionnaire included multiple-choice and open-ended short answer questions created to gather socio-demographic data and experiences of healthcare providers. Five level Likert scale (from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree)) was used in data collection about attitudes related to interprofessional collaboration and barriers. The questionnaire was prepared in Google Forms and distributed to physicians and pharmacists. Data were gathered during the period February-March, 2020.

Findings A study population consisted of 53 participants, pharmacists (54.7%) and physicians (45.3%). The most respondents stated that have interprofessional collaboration 1-2 times a month. The vast majority of them rated interprofessional cooperation as good (49.1%) or excellent (32.1%). Improvements of therapeutic outcomes were stated as the most common reason for cooperation. Most of participants agree that it is necessary to collaborate about patient therapy issues, particularly those related to drug interactions. Surprisingly, significantly more physicians than pharmacists, 72.2 vs. 31.0%, respectively, stated that it is necessary for pharmacists to provide physicians with up-to-date information on medicines and help them in decision making related to appropriate drug and dose selection. Moreover, only 56.6% of pharmacists and 58.6% of physicians thought that pharmacists should participate in drug dose optimization. All of them pointed out that a lack of time and the absence of institutionally organized common activities are the most significant obstacles to establish more intensive collaboration within everyday practice.

Conclusion Improvement of the future interprofessional collaboration between pharmacists and physicians in Serbia has to be systematically organized, and responsibilities of patients care should be shared, taken and respected by both professional sides.