

Can specialized HIV community pharmacies improve treatment?

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Community pharmacies with specially trained staff to provide HIV services can help HIV-infected individuals be more compliant with their essential antiviral drug regimens and hence improve patient outcomes. Users of HIV-specialized Walgreen pharmacies across the U.S. had significantly greater adherence to and persistence with their therapeutic drug regimens according to a study published in *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*.

Patricia Murphy, MPH and coauthors from Walgreen Co. and University

of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy compared therapeutic anti-[HIV drug](#) adherence (the degree to which patients follow their prescribed drug regimen) and persistence (the time to treatment discontinuation) for HIV/AIDS patients who used HIV-specialized pharmacies or traditional community pharmacies during the time span of a year. The study, "Impact of HIV Specialized Pharmacies on Adherence and Persistence with Antiretroviral Therapy," followed patients in nine cities across seven states. The researchers propose that their results should demonstrate the value of implementing policies to encourage the use of specialized HIV pharmacies for filling antiviral prescriptions.

"While antiretroviral treatments have dramatically increased the health and life expectancy of people infected with HIV, and helped to slow HIV transmission, these medications only work if taken on a regular basis," says Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Laurence, MD, Director of the Laboratory for [AIDS Virus](#) Research at Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, NY. "Enlisting pharmacies in a multi-pronged approach to maintaining [patient adherence](#) is critical. This study demonstrates the role of the pharmacist in this important endeavor."

More information: The article is available free on the *AIDS Patient Care and STDs* website at <http://www.liebertpub.com/apc>.

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