

Embedding non-dispensing pharmacists in medical centers to improve patient outcomes

October 11 2016, by Robert Burgin



An embedded pharmacist could result in better patient outcomes. Credit: University of Queensland

Medication-related problems are one of the most common reasons for patients to be readmitted to hospital.

University of Queensland School of Pharmacy researcher Dr Chris Freeman is investigating whether having a [pharmacist working alongside your GP](#) could save you that hassle in the future.

"In Australian hospitals, up to 45 per cent of patients discharged from

medical units and 61 per cent from geriatric units, have an unplanned readmission within a year," Dr Freeman said.

"One of the main groups of people at high risk of readmission include those taking multiple medicines.

"Many of the medication-related problems encountered are preventable."

Dr Freeman and his research team are trialling the concept of having a non-dispensing pharmacist embedded in 14 medical centres in the greater Brisbane area.

They anticipate that the presence of such a pharmacist could improve the transfer of information between hospitals and caregivers and ensure treatment plans remain appropriate to the patient.

The pharmacists can help patients negotiate changes to their dosage and assist in stopping and starting different medicines, as well as follow-up blood tests.

Aside from saving human lives, it's forecast that placing pharmacists in general practice could result in \$544.87 million savings in health care over four years.

"The pharmacists in the trial will perform a comprehensive review to identify any medication-related problems," Dr Freeman said.

"They'll assess [medication adherence](#), review the patient medication discharge letter, and discuss any changes made to medication during hospital admission with the patient.

"The pharmacists will then update medical centre records and inform community pharmacies of the changes.

"After consultation, the patient will see their usual GP to receive any necessary new prescriptions and to consider any changes suggested by the embedded pharmacist."

Provided by University of Queensland

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