

Increased role of pharmacists—safer medication use

4 September 2012

(Medical Xpress)—Researchers at The University of Queensland's School of Pharmacy are making medication use safer by incorporating pharmacists into general practice medical centres. However, they are often underutilised in the primary care setting." Mr Freeman said.

During a three year study, a pharmacist was integrated into a Brisbane inner-city suburban general practice medical centre to provide medication reviews for practice patients and quality use of medicine services for the practice.

The study, led by Mr Christopher Freeman, a registered pharmacist currently completing his PhD with the School of Pharmacy at The University of Queensland, showed that GP referrals for medication reviews at the clinic increased by more than 400 per cent during the period of the study.

Medication reviews are conducted by registered pharmacists after referral by a GP, allowing a comprehensive assessment of patient's medication regimens with an aim to increase the safe and effective use of medicines.

The reviews seek to decrease the prevalence of adverse drug events in the community, of which 23 per cent are currently deemed preventable.

"Integration of a pharmacist into a general practice medical centre allows for increased opportunity for communication and collaboration with GPs and other health professionals." Mr Freeman said.

"This model provides improvement in the quality use of medications for patients and decreases harms associated with medications."

The model does not intend to replace the current role of pharmacists in the community; instead, it seeks to extend the reach of a pharmacist's specialist knowledge in the use of medicines.

"Pharmacists are equipped with a wide variety of skills and have expertise in medication therapy

"We have shown the potential benefits of this new model of pharmacy practice, building on the important role of the pharmacist currently play in the community pharmacy environment."

Mr Freeman's findings have recently been published in the esteemed *International Journal of Pharmacy Practice*.

More information: onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/1097-4562.1200213.x/abstract

Provided by University of Queensland

APA citation: Increased role of pharmacists—safer medication use (2012, September 4) retrieved 14 June 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-09-role-pharmacistssafer-medication.html>

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