

2015

Knowing Your Pharmacist's Name

Lisa Dragic

Vivan Pham

Albert Wertheimer

Follow this and additional works at: <http://pubs.lib.umn.edu/innovations>

Recommended Citation

Dragic L, Pham V, Wertheimer A. Knowing Your Pharmacist's Name. *Inov Pharm*. 2015;6(3): Article 211. <http://pubs.lib.umn.edu/innovations/vol6/iss3/7>

INNOVATIONS in pharmacy is published by the University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing.

Knowing Your Pharmacist's Name

Lisa Dragic, Pharm D Candidate; Vivan Pham, Pharm D Candidate; and Albert Wertheimer, RPh, PhD, MBA
Temple University School of Pharmacy

Acknowledgments: N/A

Disclosure: Nothing to Disclose

Keywords: pharmacist name, know your pharmacist know your medicine, pharmacist, patient relationship, patient outcomes, know your medicine know your pharmacist

Abstract

Pharmacists are the most accessible health care providers to the general public. Pharmacists are experts in helping patients get the most out of today's complicated medications. Pharmacists ensure safe and effective use of medications. The American Pharmacists Association pitched a campaign, "Know your medicine, know your pharmacist." Before one can know their medicine, one must know their pharmacist. This study was conducted to see whether older or younger and male versus female patients knew their pharmacist's name better in the Philadelphia area, as a pilot study.

Introduction

There are 300,000 licensed pharmacists in the United States.. Pharmacists are the only health professionals immediately available to Americans without the need of making office appointments. Pharmacists are able to talk in plain, non-technical language to help the patient.¹ Researchers have shown that nearly 70 percent of Americans are taking at least one prescription drug and more than half receive at least two. In addition to this, 20% of US patients were also found to be on five or more prescription medications.² Furthermore, if doctors and patients used prescription drugs more wisely, they could save the U.S. health care system at least \$213 billion a year.³ Pharmacists are trained to counsel patients regarding their medications and over-the-counter drugs to help them learn how to use them correctly.⁴

In the U.S., failure to take medications as prescribed causes more than 1.5 million preventable medication-related adverse events every year and costs the health care system approximately \$290 billion.⁵ Taking medications correctly is one of the best ways to decrease healthcare costs. The likelihood of medication errors occurring decreases substantially when patients know their pharmacist, feel comfortable asking questions, and seek their advice.⁵

The pharmacist and physician are both part of a health care team that works together to ensure proper selection and usage on prescription and non-prescription medication. Pharmacists are the medication experts that help meet the health care needs of people by moving away from 'making medications' to helping patients 'make their medications work' by providing services such as medication therapy management (MTM). MTM allows the pharmacist to screen for interactions between drugs, unnecessary drug

duplications, and to ensure all of the patient's conditions are adequately treated.⁵ In addition to MTM, pharmacists provide education, prevention and wellness services to help patients improve their health outcomes.

Several studies demonstrate that pharmacists provide services that save healthcare dollars.^{6,7} Thus, pharmacists not only improve patient outcomes but also generate savings in the healthcare system. By knowing their pharmacist's name, the patient will know their medication and conditions better leading to increases in clinical outcomes.

Methods

From January 2014 through April 2014, surveys were administered at three different locations:

1. Location 1 was a chain pharmacy located in North Philadelphia. The community is predominately African American with more females than males. The average age was 34 years. The average income was \$34,000.
2. Location 2 was a chain pharmacy located in South Philadelphia. The community is predominately African American. The average age was 32 years. The average income was \$34,000.
3. Location 3 was a chain pharmacy located in Northwestern Philadelphia. The community is predominately white with more males than females. The average age of males was 37 years and the average age of females was 38 years. The average income was \$73,000.

Two hundred and forty eight surveys were collected. These surveys asked age, gender and whether or not the patient knew their pharmacist's name. 100 surveys were collected

from Location #1, 60 from Location #2 and 88 from Location #3. Age above 65 was considered elderly.

Findings

TABLE 1: KNOWING THE PHARMACIST’S NAME BY AGE

	LOCATION 1	LOCATION 2	LOCATION 3
PATIENTS > 65 WHO ANSWERED YES	18 OUT OF 22	12 OUT OF 18	11 OUT OF 16
PERCENTAGE YES	82%	67%	69%
PATIENTS ≤ 65 WHO ANSWERED YES	40 OUT OF 78	18 OUT OF 42	21 OUT OF 72
PERCENTAGE YES	51%	43%	29%

TABLE 2: KNOWING THE PHARMACISTS NAME BY GENDER

	LOCATION 1	LOCATION 2	LOCATION 3
MALES WHO ANSWERED YES	35 OUT OF 57	14 OUT OF 33	9 OUT OF 50
PERCENTAGE YES	61%	42%	18%
FEMALES WHO ANSWERED YES	32 OUT OF 43	17 OUT OF 27	17 OUT OF 38
PERCENTAGE YES	74%	63%	45%

TABLE 3: AGGREGATE RESULTS

PATIENT POPULATIONS SURVEYED	PATIENTS WHO ANSWERED YES	PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS WHO KNEW THEIR PHARMACISTS NAME
MALES KNOWING NAME	58 OUT OF 140	41.4%
FEMALES KNOWING NAME	67 OUT OF 108	62.0%
OVER 65 YEARS KNOWING NAME	41 OUT OF 56	73.2%
UP TO 65 YEARS	80 OUT OF 192	41.6%
ALL AGES AND GENDERS	246 OUT OF 496	49.6%

Summary of Results

The data showed the same results that patients who were older than 65 years old knew the name of the pharmacist at all three locations. At location #1, 82% of patients over 65 knew their pharmacist’s name versus 51% (who were under 65), 67% versus 43% at location #2, and 69% versus 29% at location #3, respectively.

Furthermore, we also separated the data to answer the question whether gender shows a difference in knowing the pharmacist’s name at these 3 different locations. The following data were collected: 74% of females knew their pharmacist’s name versus 61% of males at location #1, 63% of females knew their pharmacist’s name versus 42% of males at location #2, and 45% of females knew their pharmacist’s name versus 18% of males at location #3.

Comparison to Initial Survey Conducted By American Pharmacists Association in 2004

In June 2004, The American Pharmacists Association conducted a 1,260 patient survey called “Know your Medicine: Know your Pharmacist.” It was revealed that consumers who know their pharmacist’s name have better medication use behaviors and are more likely to tell their pharmacist the other medicines that they are currently taking, read product labels all the time, know the main ingredients of the prescriptions they are using, and use their pharmacist as a source of information for medicines.⁸

However, not all patients use their pharmacist as a resource. The “Know your Medicine: Know your Pharmacist” survey showed that only one-third of the patients surveyed (34%) knew their pharmacist’s name but are more likely to be on a first name basis with their hair dresser (56%), compared to their pharmacist (21%).⁸

In addition to the above findings, the survey revealed that high-volume prescription fillers, women, seniors, those with an elderly dependent, and consumers in poor/very poor health are more likely to know their pharmacist’s name than other patients. Furthermore, personal relationships with pharmacists improve with age; women and seniors more commonly have close relationships with pharmacists.⁸

Compared to the APhA study in 2004, our pilot study demonstrated a positive trend of percentage of patients knowing their pharmacist’s name. There was a 15.6% increase in comparison to the APhA study done 10 years ago. The patient population with the highest awareness remained constant. Women and seniors were more likely in both studies to know their pharmacist’s name.

Conclusions

From this data, it is concluded that older female patients appear to be more associated with their pharmacist. This could be due to the fact that females are more likely than males to pick up medications at the pharmacy for the family and thus are more familiar with their pharmacist. Furthermore, older patients tend to require more prescription medications and therefore are more exposed to interaction with the pharmacist. However, further study with greater precision and a more elaborate sampling design will be required to answer these questions with greater precision.

Recommendations For Improving Pharmacist-Patient Relationship

Although this pilot study demonstrates an increase in percentage of patients who knew their pharmacist's name, pharmacists need to continue to engage in consumer interactions. To do so, pharmacists and technicians must work together as a team with a unified goal. Pharmacists can hand out personal business cards with their name and contact information along with each prescription. In addition, technicians can introduce the pharmacist by saying, "Have you met our pharmacist John?" This simple question can lead to a conversation that may not have previously taken place.

Pharmacies can place pictures of the pharmacists on the wall with their names below it. Matching a face with a name may help patients remember the pharmacist. Furthermore, pharmacies can have counter mats and flyers with information about the pharmacist. Pharmacists must continue to educate their patients on the services offered at their pharmacy. Instead of picking up the phone and saying, "Thank you for calling CVS this is John. Did you get your flu shot?" one can say, "This is John the pharmacist on duty, how can I help you?"

As always, pharmacists and their team need to engage in as much conversation with patients as possible. Saying hello, acknowledging the patient, and thanking them for their service are acts of kindness that people never forget. Patients do not care about how much one knows, until they know how much one cares about them. These simple gestures go a long way in making the patient feel like a patient rather than a number.

There is a clear relationship between the consumer, their pharmacist, and the consumer's knowledge of how to use medications with lower risk of adverse effects and better health outcomes. Therefore, pharmacists must continue to

strive for better patient relationships to optimize these goals and ensure these outcomes.

References

1. Fritts, Michelle. "October Is American Pharmacists Month – Know Your Pharmacist, Know Your Medicine." *American Pharmacists Association*. N.p., 1 Oct. 2012. Web. 29 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.pharmacist.com/october-american-pharmacists-month-%E2%80%93-know-your-pharmacist-know-your-medicine>>.
2. "Study Shows 70 Percent of Americans Take Prescription Drugs." *CBSNews*. CBS Interactive, n.d. Web. 28 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/study-shows-70-percent-of-americans-take-prescription-drugs/>>.
3. "Study: Smarter Medication Use Could save \$213B in Health Care Costs." *CBSNews*. CBS Interactive, 19 June 2013. Web. 29 Apr. 2014. <<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/study-smarter-medication-use-could-save-213b-in-health-care-costs/>>.
4. "Do You Know the Name of Your Pharmacist?" *Do You Know the Name of Your Pharmacist?* N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Apr. 2014. <http://www.consumer-health.com/services/DoYouKnowtheNameofYourPharmacist.php>.
5. October is American Pharmacists Month – Know Your Pharmacist, Know Your Medicine. (n.d.).
6. Reinke, T. (n.d.). Medication Therapy Management Program in N.C. Saves \$13 Million. Retrieved August 3, 2015.
7. Schommer JC, et al. Pharmacist-provided medication therapy management (part 2): Payer perspectives in 2007. *J Am Pharm Assoc*. 2008;48:478–86.
8. Levy, Sandra. "APhA to Consumers: Know Your Pharmacist." *Drug Topics*. N.p., 27 Sept. 2007. Web. 29 Apr. 2014. <<http://drugtopics.modernmedicine.com/drug-topics/news/apha-consumers-know-your-pharmacist?page=full>>.