



MCPHS

MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE of PHARMACY and HEALTH SCIENCES

An Assessment of Utilization of Pharmacists to Educate Patients on Their Chronic Health Conditions

David H. Lee, PharmD, Kristine C. Willett, PharmD, Cheryl Durand PharmD, Cheryl Abel, PharmD.
Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences, School of Pharmacy, 1260 Elm Street Manchester, NH 03101

BACKGROUND

Community pharmacists are one of the most accessible healthcare resources to the community, responsible for both the education and correct delivery of medication to patients. Despite being responsible for approximately 72% of prescriptions filled annually in the United States, pharmacists remain vastly underutilized by patients in the management of health conditions, which may result in overall increases in healthcare costs and poorer outcomes due to issues in compliance.¹

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this study is two-fold: (1) to evaluate the utilization of the pharmacist to educate patients on their chronic health conditions and (2) to identify potential barriers to patients' willingness to speak with their pharmacists about their medications and chronic health conditions.

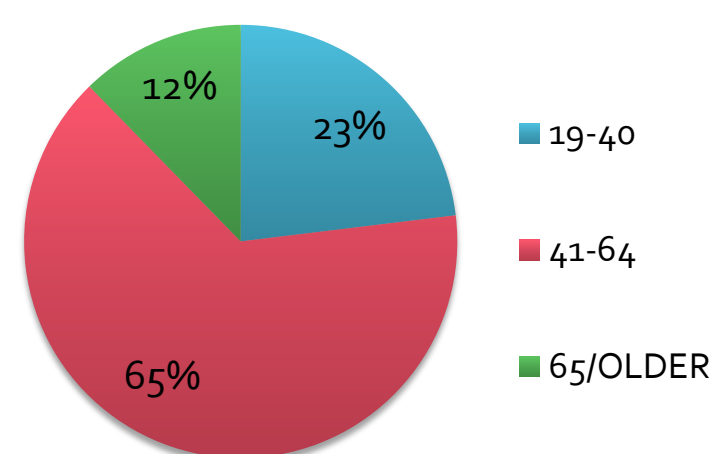
METHODS

Participants at a public downtown health fair held by pharmacy students and faculty were asked to complete a survey. The survey questions gathered patient demographic information as well as information on type of health insurance, current medical conditions, and the number of medications taken daily. Participants were also asked if they understood their medications, if they have ever spoken with their pharmacist about their medical condition or immunizations. The methods of this study have been approved by the Institutional Review Board.

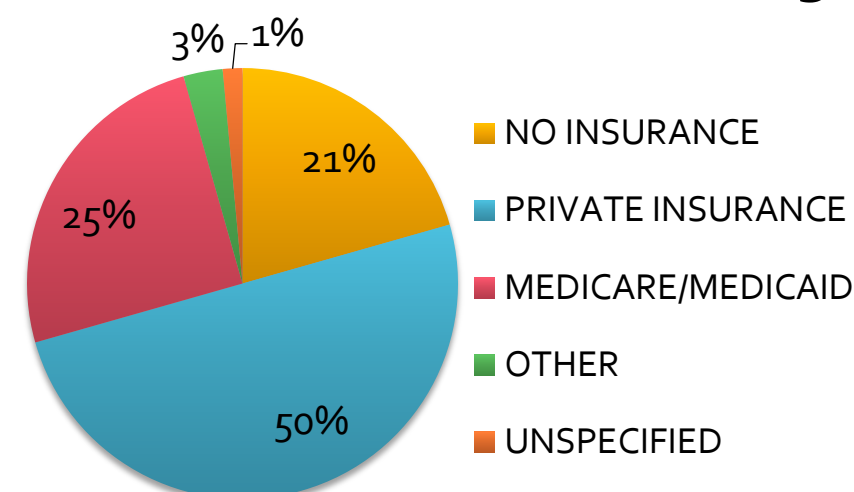
RESULTS

- 65 participants completed the survey
- 60% of the participants were women
- 64.7% were between the ages of 41 to 64 years old
- The most commonly reported health conditions were hypertension, dyslipidemia and gastroesophageal reflux disease

Age Groups

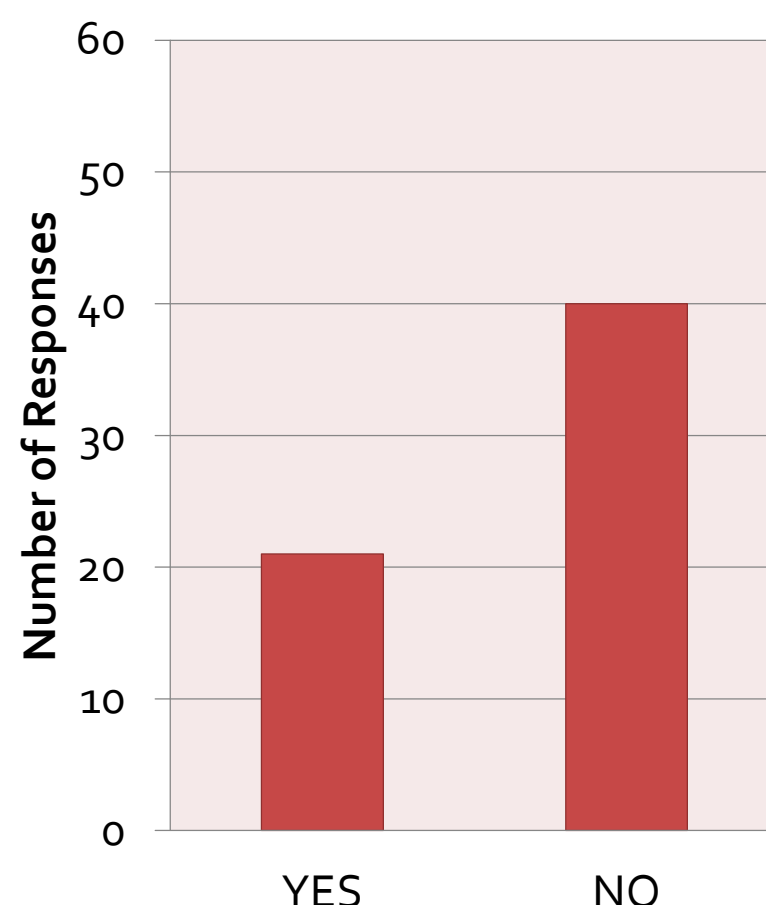


Insurance Coverage

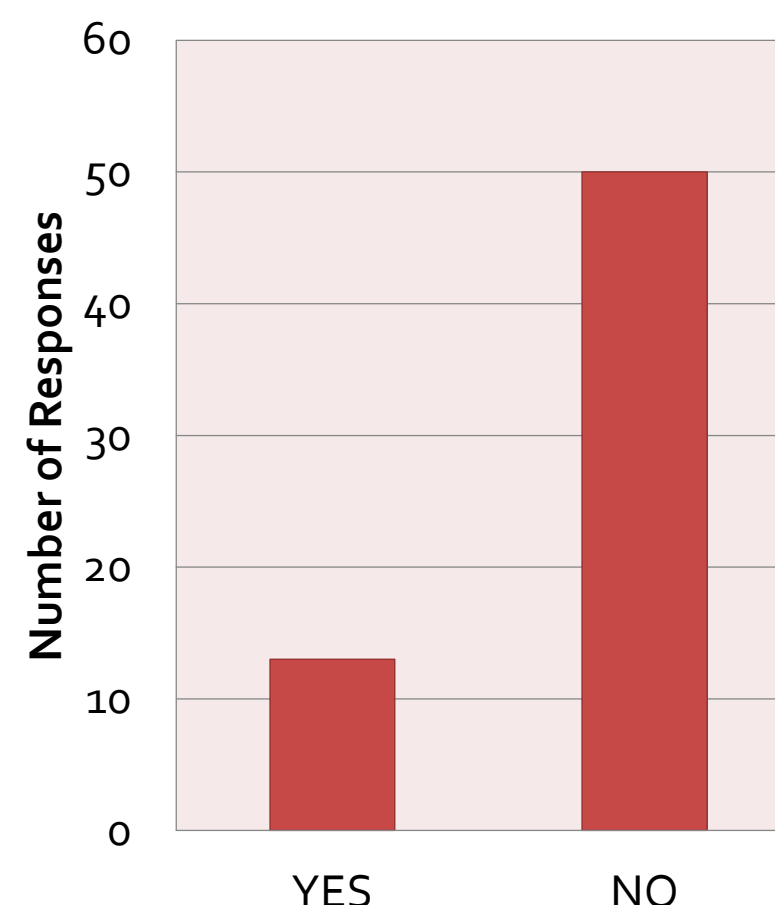


- There were no correlations between age and insurance type with patients speaking with their pharmacist about their medical conditions or about immunizations.

Spoke with Pharmacist about Medical Conditions



Spoke with Pharmacist about Immunizations



CONCLUSION

- Due to the nature of this health fair, we were unable to evaluate patient compliance to their medications or the accuracy of their understanding of medication use.
- Objective data was used to investigate correlations between demographic information gathered and patient utilization of pharmacists, however no correlations were found.
- Additional limitations in this study included the relatively small sample size, which was partly due to both environmental and proximity factors resulting in a less than anticipated turnout.
- Interestingly, only 32.3% of patients have spoken to their pharmacists about their chronic medical condition and an even smaller percentage (20%) have spoken with their pharmacists about immunizations.
- As the role of pharmacists continues to expand, it is also imperative to remove intangible barriers to access by integrating pharmacist-driven disease state management as a primary adjunct to medication therapy itself.

FUTURE DIRECTION

- Further studies identifying barriers to utilizing pharmacist services, specific to the local population may provide insight into techniques to improve pharmacist involvement in patient care.
- Surveying a wider population would provide a better representation of the community and potentially reveal correlations between certain patient characteristics and decreased pharmacist utilization.

DISCLOSURE

The authors of this presentation have nothing to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this project.