Evaluating the Effects of a Long Term Care Pharmacist Educator Component in a Family Medicine Residency Program

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What we Learned

- The incorporation of a long term care (LTC) / pharmacy half-day component as part of a family medicine residency program had a positive impact on the physicians’ experience.
- It has helped to foster a strong working relationship between physicians and pharmacists and an openness to pursuing geriatric and/or LTC medicine further.

Methods

- 11-question anonymous, electronic survey sent to physicians from the residency program (N=60)
- Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with current residents, the program director, and pharmacist

Background

- The frequency of pharmacist educators in family medicine programs in Canada has increased from 14% in 1994 to 25% in 2011.¹,²
- Over the past 5 years, a pharmacist-led half-day practicum in a LTC home and LTC pharmacy has been offered as part of the Barrie Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) Family Medicine Residency program
- The initiative was designed to foster inter-professional collaboration as well as an interest in geriatrics and long term care (LTC) among upcoming physicians

Survey Results

- Physician’s satisfaction with geriatric rotation and pharmacy/LTC half day
- Physician’s interaction with LTC patients and pharmacists
- Physicians’ agreement with LTC/pharmacy half day component for future residents
- Distribution of physicians’ current description of practice (N=24)

Limitations

- The study was limited with a small sample size of 24 respondents; this could have led to a biased outcome.

Major themes from semi-structured interviews

Reinforcement of a collaborative health care approach

“...it was nice to see...[pharmacists] more involved as part of our care team”  
(Medical Resident)

“...spending half a day with a specialist in a geriatric pharmacy is going to let them know what that team member does for the care of their patients.”  
(Residency Program Director)

Increased appreciation for pharmacists

“...it taught me a lot about what...[pharmacists] potentially could do, or help...[physicians] with...”  
(Medical Resident)

Impact on career decisions (pursuing geriatrics, LTC)

“...it made me more inclined to want to work in a nursing home setting.”  
(Medical Resident)

Reduction in medication errors

“you get to see the comments from pharmacists...in terms of reviewing their [patients] medication and I think it was a really reassuring thing that...you do have that great backup.”  
(Medical Resident)

References