



A REDEFINING CONCEPT OF EXPERT PHARMACY SERVICES FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DRUGSTORES

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Abstract:

While there are many words and definitions used to characterize some parts of pharmacy practice and service delivery, none fully capture the scope of professional services provided by community pharmacies. The professional philosophy of pharmaceutical care or specific professional pharmacy services—particularly pharmaceutical services offered by pharmacists with an emphasis on drug safety, effectiveness, and health outcomes—are referenced in the majority of current pharmacy service definitions and nomenclature. Determining a professional pharmacy service within the framework of the community pharmacy model of service supply is thus the aim of this article. According to Donabedian's framework, the definition of a professional pharmacy service includes the concepts of organizational structure, process indicators, and outcome measures. It is defined as "an action or set of actions undertaken in or organized by a pharmacy, delivered by a pharmacist or other health practitioner, who applies their specialized health knowledge personally or via an intermediary, with a patient/client, population, or other health professional, to optimize the process of care, with the aim to improve health outcomes and the value of healthcare." The definition will help in many ways, such as recognizing the entire spectrum of services offered by community pharmacies and making it easier to identify signs of the implementation and sustainability of professional pharmacy services. A straightforward conceptual model that encompasses all of the services offered by community pharmacies is put forth.

Keywords: Value of Healthcare, Medication, Pharmaceutical Care, Community Pharmacy Services, and Health Outcomes

Introduction:



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Because they either focus on defining services that stem from the pharmaceutical care idea or are limited to services specifically related to it, current definitions of pharmacy services do not encompass the full range of services that community pharmacies offer.

pharmacists' delivery (Appendix A). One of the main phrases used to characterize pharmacy work outside of the dispensing field is "pharmaceutical care."^{1–5} The "pharmaceutical care" philosophy was changed into a "service-based definition," wherein drug-related services were offered.

by pharmacists "specialised knowledge by pharmacists for the patient or health care professionals for purpose of promoting effective and safe drug therapy."⁴ Subsequent authors modified the idea and coined the term cognitive pharmaceutical services, which again kept pharmacists at the core, but broadened the outcome to patient health rather than drug therapy alone, for example "professional services provided by pharmacists, who use their skills and knowledge to take an active role in contributing to patient health, through effective interaction with both patients and other health professionals."⁶ The term cognitive pharmaceutical services (CPS) was further adapted to incorporate aspects lacking in previous definitions such as, health services at a local community or population level and acknowledging the role of other pharmacy staff, "CPS can be seen as a range of healthcare-related activities (some of them including pharmaceutical care) to enhance public health and the quality of drug therapy, promoted by the pharmacy staff."⁷

While pharmacist-driven services may still primarily focus on pharmaceutical care, a more comprehensive definition is required to recognize the larger role that community pharmacies and the community pharmacy network as a whole play in healthcare. The function of community pharmacies has been significantly reduced by pharmaceutical care definitions, which primarily concentrate on drug safety, efficacy, and maximizing health outcomes related to medication use. As the profession grows and changes, it's critical to recognize and record the wide range of services offered by community pharmacies (which include healthcare services and other health professionals) as well as pharmacists (which include a variety of settings and specializations). Community pharmacies' professional and business operations, as well as the role of pharmacists, have seen significant changes and expansion in recent times. The practice settings of pharmacists are becoming more diverse, and specializations are growing.⁸

Community pharmacies are also incorporating professional pharmacy services into their business models and professional practices.⁸ It is evidently beneficial for pharmacists to continue to expand and differentiate their roles. The growth and uniqueness of community pharmacy practices are equally essential to their continued existence. This is especially true in the current global context, as the old company model is under pressure from the economy. Globally, there is a growing tendency for governments, health insurance providers, and/or

individuals to be prepared to pay for a variety of pharmaceutical services that are intended to enhance patient outcomes.⁹

The pharmacy practice literature lacks a single, widely recognized definition that covers all of the functions, services, and products offered by community pharmacies. To determine the scope of current pharmacy service definitions, a preliminary literature assessment was carried out utilizing texts, conference proceedings, online databases (PubMed, MEDLINE, without date limits), and bibliographic searching. The investigation turned up a number of terminology and definitions used to characterize the services provided by pharmacists as well as features of pharmacy practice and service delivery, but none of them covered the entire spectrum of services provided by community pharmacies (Appendix A). As community pharmacies offer an accessible health network that delivers a larger variety of health services and by a wider range of healthcare providers than generally acknowledged, an all-encompassing community pharmacy-centric service definition is necessary.

A more comprehensive definition will help with study into the kinds and overall impact of service quality, performance, and implementation as community pharmacies transition to a service provider model. Lastly, a more inclusive definition would make it easier for the government, stakeholders, and community to recognize the importance of community pharmacy and the value they bring to the healthcare system. A broader acknowledgement of community pharmacies as medical facilities could subsequently result in their increased inclusion in health policies.

What constitutes a reputable pharmacy service :

The following definition is suggested in order to comprehend the entire range of professional pharmacy services that community pharmacies offer or may offer: An action, or series of actions, performed in or coordinated by a pharmacy and provided by a pharmacist or other health practitioner who uses their specialized medical knowledge directly or through a middleman with a patient/client, population, or other health professional in order to optimize the care process and enhance health outcomes and the value of healthcare is known as a professional pharmacy service.

Donabedian's framework for assessing the quality of medical care serves as the conceptual foundation for the definition of a professional pharmacy service.¹⁰ Within the context of a professional pharmacy service, the components include the pharmacy setting/resources, such as the structure, provider and client behaviors of the care process, and health outcomes. Although health outcomes are largely regarded as the gold standard for measuring healthcare services, professional practice and the surrounding environment are some aspects that can be changed for better results.

The following are the crucial elements found in this definition:

1. "service" is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "an action, set of actions, or a series of defined activities, also synonymously termed a program."¹¹ The emphasis is on the experience, benefit, or value that a service creates.¹²

2. community "pharmacy" is a recognized, certified, and permitted establishment that operates in accordance with the laws and rules of each individual nation. The ability, influence, and enablement for the provision of care are provided by this organizational "structure," which comprises personnel, facilities, administrative procedures, and equipment.¹⁰ These elements could be helpful in assessing a service. A service must be "undertaken in or organized by a pharmacy" and provided on- or off-site in order to qualify as a professional pharmacy service. A service qualifies as a professional "pharmacy" service regardless of location if it respects the pharmacy's professional practice, makes use of the pharmacy's resources, staff, and/or setting. A typical example would be a medication management service, which could be rendered offsite, in a patient's home or in an assisted living facility.¹³

Another example showing how services could be expanded is health promotion activities, like a pharmacist educating parents of a childcare facility or staff members of a medical center on proper prescribing practices.^{14–16} It is evident that a professional pharmacy service needs to be associated with a pharmacy, but it is not limited to being carried out on pharmacy property, unlike definitions that have been proposed thus far.

3. Professional pharmacy services are not limited to being "delivered by a pharmacist," as other health care providers may also be specialist (Fig. 1). Compared to earlier definitions, which focus more on the pharmacist than the pharmacy, this one is significantly different (Appendix A). A nurse practitioner overseeing a vaccination program (like a flu clinic) or baby consultation, or a dietician working on a weight loss program or giving nutritional advice to diabetics, could all be considered professional pharmacy services with the inclusion of other healthcare professionals in the definition.¹⁷ This definition raises the question of whether the pharmacy owner(s) and/or those with whom technical responsibility ultimately bear legal and/or professional responsibility for all professional pharmacy services.

4. A pharmacist's or other healthcare practitioner's "specialized health knowledge" must be applied in order for a professional pharmacy service to be considered "professional."^{18–20} It is ideal for this specialized health knowledge to be applied using an evidence-based approach and to be an essential component of the care process. Crucially, this expert knowledge is not limited to medicine. Pharmacists are experts in medication, but they also have a broad understanding of health issues, and many of them are now focusing on less conventional fields.¹⁶ For instance, identifying, managing, or triaging health-related issues is a crucial part of good pharmacy practice.²¹

By including and emphasizing the word "professional" in the definition, we effectively exclude services that are not of a professional nature. Examples include ear piercing, photo

printing, beauty services, mailing or delivering medication to patients' homes, and the sale of goods without help or guidance. These services fall within the category of pharmacy services even though they are not within the purview of professional pharmacy services because they are offered by pharmacies and do not need the application of any specialist knowledge linked to health.

5. Limiting service delivery to direct, face-to-face encounters between patients and clients would not be sufficient because there are other points of service delivery. The definition is being expanded in response to criticism that pharmacy only serves the individual client.^{17, 22} Professional pharmacy services can be provided to an individual, a patient, or someone acting on their behalf (referred to as "patient/client"), a community or group (referred to as "population"), or "other health professional." "Personally" refers to whatever direct communication between a health expert and a patient, client, public, or other health professional; in contrast, the use of a "intermediary" allows for the application of information indirectly.

Supervised pharmacy employees and technology, including automated machines or websites, can function as intermediaries. The health care provider, who is in charge of the treatment process, is the one who provides the intermediary's knowledge in every situation and oversees or reviews it. A qualified and experienced pharmacy employee would work under another medical expert. Blood pressure monitoring, compression stocking size, and weight management are just a few examples of the professional pharmaceutical services offered by intermediary staff members.¹⁷ Examples of technologies include health information websites.^{23, 24}

6. "Optimizing the process of care" is a fundamental component of a professional pharmacy service. The medical care process is made up of two or more sets of behaviors between the client and the provider that come together to produce health outcomes through service participation.²⁵ The process of care is made up of three parts: identification of a need (including prevention), use of the service, and modification of the need. The behaviors of the client (which includes patients, carers, and third parties) include recognizing a need, choosing to seek care, going through the process of seeking care, and taking on the role of the sick in order to maintain care.²⁵ The behaviors of the provider, which includes coordinating with other healthcare professionals, include recognizing a need, diagnosing it, and making decisions about how best to modify it. By modifying any of the behaviors or elements in the treatment process, the goal is to maximize the utilization of the professional pharmaceutical service.

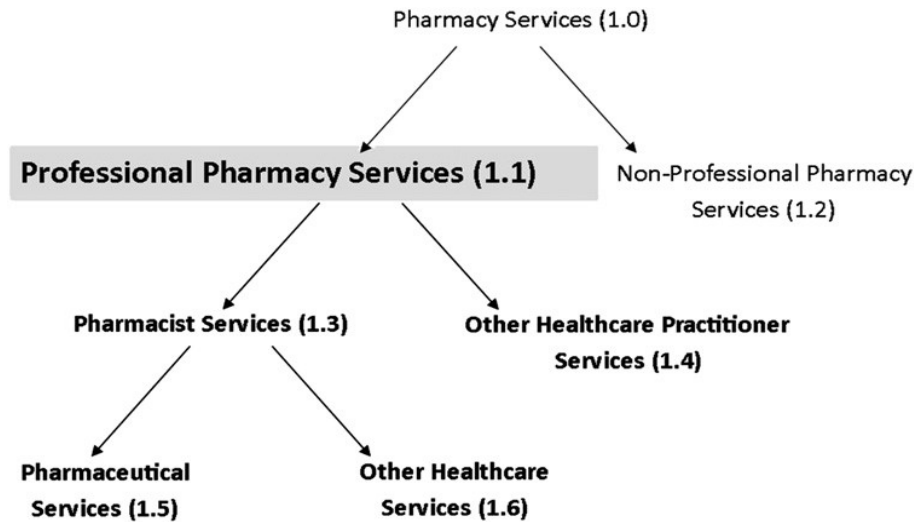
7. A professional pharmacy service's overarching goals are to "improve health outcomes" (avoid negative, maintain positive, or improve economic, clinical, or humanistic outcomes) and "increase the value of healthcare" (maximize health outcomes for the money spent).^{26,27} The processes of care behaviors (provider and client) and patient health outcomes are also considered

health indicators, which can be measured to potentially predict outcomes. Quality is frequently used to show

While outcomes in healthcare are often viewed as safety and efficaciousness parameters, process measures like faithfulness to evidence-based practice guidelines are important.²⁶ Value, a relatively new concept in healthcare, is determined on the total cycle of patient care for a specific condition, usually involving multiple settings, services, and costs to achieve outcomes. Although the focus has shifted from volume to value in healthcare due to performance improvement and increased value, the structure of the health system makes it challenging to assess value.²⁷ Process and outcome measurements are still necessary.

Model for providing pharmacy services

The comprehensive range of services provided by a pharmacy includes professional pharmacy services (Fig. 1). Community pharmacies offer a broad range of pharmacy services, both professional and non-professional. Non-professional services, in contrast to professional services, are not focused on "improving health outcomes and the value of healthcare," nor do they "optimize the process of care" or use any "specialized health knowledge." Research on pharmacy practice has mostly focused on the services that pharmacists offer (Pharmacist Services 1.3). Other healthcare practitioners may offer services through pharmacies, and these ought to be covered under the professional services that a pharmacy offers (Other Healthcare Practitioner Services 1.4). A diverse range of concepts, terminologies, services, classification schemes, and ideas have been developed in an effort to translate the idea of pharmaceutical care into practice; these have no discernible intellectual underpinnings (Appendix A). The mix indicated above falls under the category of Pharmacist Services (1.3). Pharmaceutical Services (1.5) (drug therapy, including pharmaceutical care, medication management, clinical, and cognitive pharmaceutical services) and Other Healthcare Services (1.6) (primary care, health promotion, and other related services) comprise the two categories of pharmacist services. Pharmacists' primary focus will continue to be on medication therapy, which is their area of expertise. However, they should be knowledgeable about all services that leverage their varied skill set and knowledge base to increase the value of healthcare (1.1).



Conclusion:

Limiting the scope of professional pharmacy services makes it easier to comprehend the value and function community pharmacies serve in the healthcare system, both alone and as a group. Moreover, applying the definition makes it possible to identify and then quantify professional pharmacy services. This will help when assessing the community pharmacy network based on the value it adds to the healthcare system. A pharmacy's overall offering, the pace and scope of its service implementation, and the caliber of its service delivery can all be evaluated separately. Once a pharmacy or group of pharmacies has implemented professional pharmacy services successfully, they can be identified as the professional service provider(s). As part of their overall offering, or the sum of all the goods, services, or combinations of these that they provide to their customers, pharmacies will be able to differentiate themselves based on the quantity, kind, caliber, or quality of services they offer.²⁸ The ultimate objective is for community pharmacies to be duly acknowledged as providers of professional pharmacy services in addition to products.

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