

Information Needs Assessment of Pharmacy Preceptors

Trish Chatterley¹, Cheryl Cox², Verla Chatsis³

1. John W. Scott Health Sciences Library, University of Alberta Libraries 2. Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Alberta 3. Regional Pharmacy Services, Alberta Health Services

Introduction

Access to current, reliable information resources is important for patient care yet many pharmacists, especially in community settings, often have limited access. Pharmacists also require skills to search efficiently, critically appraise evidence, and translate information into effective patient care.

At the time of this survey, preceptors did not have access to the University of Alberta Libraries resources while the students they supervised had full access. This made information skills teaching challenging.

The researchers investigated pharmacist preceptors' information needs, awareness of resources, and skills to access resources with the goal of identifying areas where access and training could be improved to enhance placement experiences for both preceptors and students.

Methods

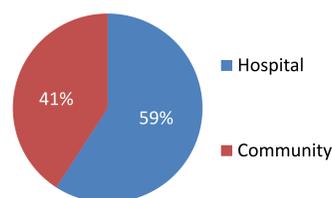
In June 2010, a 24 question electronic survey was distributed to all pharmacists serving as preceptors for the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in the Winter and Fall 2010 terms (446 individuals).

The survey instrument was left open for one and a half weeks. One reminder email was sent during that period.

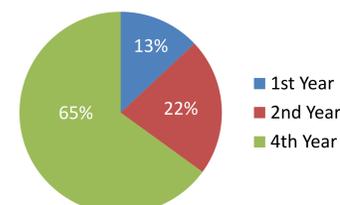
Results

•159 individuals completed the survey, for a response rate of 35.7%.

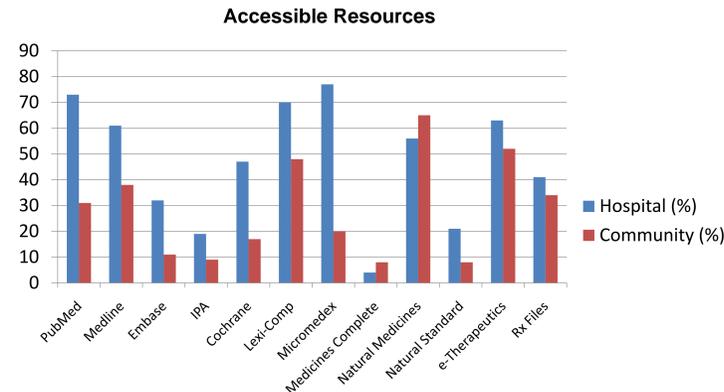
Respondent Location



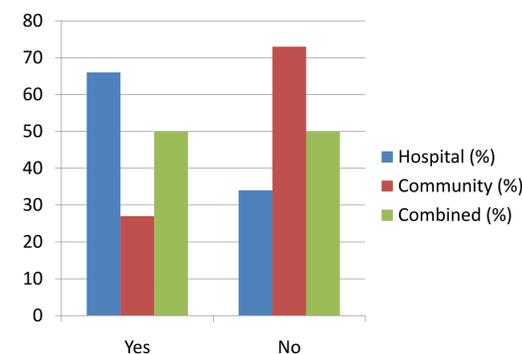
Year of Student Supervised



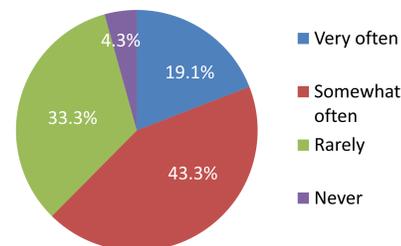
More Results



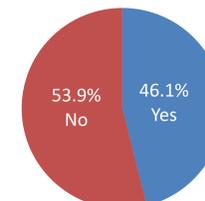
Received CE with regard to using information resources



How often do you teach student pharmacists to use information resources?



Are you currently comfortable coaching your students about development of online literature searching strategies?



Results

The perceived benefits of increased access to online resources:

- higher quality information is available (more current, broader scope)
- improved learning outcomes for students (more learning opportunities, preceptors able to verify student answers, provide more guidance, develop more current and challenging research topics, and more easily assess student skills)
- impact for preceptors (aid in clinical decision-making and effective patient care, save time with easy and immediate access to resources, larger knowledge base potential, increased confidence with tools, enhanced current awareness, more satisfying experience, reduced frustration with same access as students)

Discussion

While 62.4% of preceptors somewhat or very often teach student pharmacists to use information resources, only 46.1% are actually comfortable teaching development of literature search strategies.

Providing preceptors with access to the University of Alberta Libraries resources will resolve most of the discrepancies for resource availability between hospital and community pharmacies and rural and urban sites.

Many pharmacists have not received training in the use of clinical databases, or may lack confidence in their skills due to infrequent use. Preceptors will require training in the use of the resources to which they now have access, and the feasibility of options must be explored. While live interactive web sessions might be more effective than online tutorials, they would require a more significant time investment because of the number of sessions required to reach all preceptors across the province.

Conclusions

• Lack of access to information resources was the biggest barrier for preceptors. Complete access to the affiliated University library's collections should be granted whenever possible. This will meet the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education accreditation standards for the PharmD program.

• Follow-up assessment is planned to find out if preceptors are using the resources now that they have access. Learning teams of students, preceptors, librarians and pharmacy faculty may be effective in enhancing the students' and preceptors' learning experiences.

Acknowledgements

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