

Patients and Health Care Provider's Perceptions and Expectations towards Hospital Pharmacist in Lahore

Dr. Arooj Masud, Dr. Noor Safia, Dr. Marriam Zaka, Dr. Saleha Sadeeqa

Abstract— During the past few years, the pharmacy profession has expanded significantly in terms of professional services delivery and now has been recognized as an important profession in the multidisciplinary provision of health care. In contrast to the situation in developed countries, pharmacists in developing countries are still underutilized and their role as health care professionals is not deemed important by either the community or other health care providers. The objective of this study was to evaluate the Patient's and Health Care Provider's Perceptions and Expectations towards Hospital Pharmacist in Lahore. For this purpose, an observational, cross-sectional and comparative study was conducted by designing a specific Data Collection Form for obtaining the relevant data. The study was conducted at different public and private sector hospitals in Lahore for two months. Data was collected by face to face interview & results were calculated. The analysis of the data depicts that majority of the population including adult patients (83%) & other health care providers (77%) have the knowledge about hospital pharmacists, (41%) of the patients think that they are dispensers. However, (76%) patients and (82%) health providers consider them as important part to improve the patient care settings in hospitals. (43%) of the health providers stated to cooperate with the hospital pharmacists as they consider them as a reliable source of drug information, while (39%) pointed out the negligence in the duties of hospital pharmacist mainly because of lack of facilities. From the point of view of the hospital pharmacists they say that (18%) of them act as storekeepers, (16%) have clinical roles to perform; while (22%) of the Hospital Pharmacist take their duties as being as storekeeper, dispenser as well as a counselor. (36%) of them pointed to have good relationship with the health care providers while (56%) said that they share healthy relationship with the patients. However, (58%) of Hospital Pharmacists stated to not face any barrier in performing their duties, while (6%) mentioned to get hindrance due to Over Burden. Therefore, in order to meet the expectations & improve the status of hospital pharmacists Government should take actions to clear the job status & duties of hospital pharmacists. Moreover, not only health care providers should provide hospital pharmacists enough space to work along with them but also pharmacists must be vigilant, knowledgeable, and active.

Index Terms— Hospital Pharmacist, Patient perception, Physician expectation, Hospital Pharmacist Duties, Duty barriers, Survey, Results

1 INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. According to which health care providers play a major role in striving for a better health in a population. In terms of modern health care delivery, achieving ultimate population health can be done by engaging multidisciplinary expertise. In the health care field, it is expected of physicians, pharmacists, nurses and others professionals to make clinical decisions anchored in a strong ethical perspective with an increasing interest among all of them to optimize patient care by applying a teamwork approach. [1], [2]

In contrast to the situation in developed countries, pharmacists in developing countries are still underutilized. They are not considered as important health care professionals by either the

community or other health care providers. To make their worth noticeable pharmacists will need to adapt their knowledge, skills and attitudes to this new pharmaceutical care role, which includes both traditional pharmaceutical science knowledge and clinical aspects of patient care, namely clinical, management and communication skills, ability to actively collaborate with medical teams, and competence to prevent and resolve medicine-related problems.

Collaboration among the various healthcare professionals with their respective expertise can lead to significant improvement in patient care. Traditionally, the physician diagnoses and prescribes while the pharmacist compounds and dispenses medicines. However, the pharmacist has now gained recognition as an important professional in the multidisciplinary provision of health care. This improvement took place in 1990, when Hepler and Strand introduced the concept of 'pharmaceutical care'. The philosophy of pharmaceutical care is now accepted worldwide as a primary mission of pharmacy.

WHO has also contributed effectively towards encouraging and defending the role of pharmacists globally. The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) and WHO developed the concept of "The seven star pharmacist", which stated that a well-rounded pharmacist should be a compassionate care giver, decision maker, active communicator, lifelong learner and good manager; possess good leadership qualities and be an able

- Arooj Masud, Institute of Pharmacy, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Noor Safia, Institute of Pharmacy, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Dr. Marriam Zaka, Institute of Pharmacy, Lecturer, Faculty of Pharmacy Practice, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.
- Dr. Saleha Sadeeqa, Institute of Pharmacy, Assistant Professor Faculty of Pharmacy Practice, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Pakistan.

teacher and researcher. The concept of pharmaceutical care can only be achieved if pharmacists and doctors agree on each other's role, as different perceptions by them regarding the pharmacist's role could reduce the level of their cooperation.

In fact, nowadays, the knowledge of the meaning of pharmacists' work and roles by other health care providers acquires a special place in the exploration of the pharmacy practice status. These perspectives can assist the profession to better understand pharmacists' situation in the health care system so that it can be enhanced, changed and advanced to better meet our patients' drug-related needs. [2][3]

The pharmacy profession is undergoing from product-oriented to patient-oriented practice which is termed as pharmaceutical care. Throughout the world, the principal task of pharmacy is considered to be the pharmaceutical care meaning the responsible provision of drug therapy for achieving definite outcomes that improve the quality of patient's life. Improved therapeutic outcomes comprises patient safety, better drug therapy & disease management, valuable health care expenditure, better adherence, and improved quality of life.

However, findings reveal that the hospital pharmacists in Pakistan are not actively participating in the provision of pharmaceutical care services. They are facing hurdles for active participation in patient care; including the shortage of sufficient number of qualified pharmacists & lack of standard practice guidelines, lack of appropriate time for patient counseling, and poor relationship between pharmacists and other health care providers.

Moreover, pharmacists prefer to work in cities and are thus concentrated in urban areas which limit the provision of uniform nationwide pharmacy services. Lack of quality medicines as well as unconventional use of medicine & weak regulatory enforcement of drug sales is also serious issues in developing countries like Pakistan.

For improvement of medicines' use & patients' quality of life, health authorities in Pakistan are obliged to implement pharmaceutical care practice in the healthcare system of the country. Successful implementation of pharmaceutical care requires cooperation both between the hospital pharmacists & health care providers. There is still a shortage of pharmacists in both private & public healthcare sectors, as per reports about 15 % of pharmacists are in federal and provincial drug control and hospital pharmacy establishments; but for the past few years their number has been increasing to an acceptable extent. Despite being involved in direct patient care, hospital pharmacists are more involved in administrative activities. Moreover, for successful execution of pharmaceutical care, the pharmacist's philosophy of practice plays vital aspect. [3][4]

2 AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the roles & responsibilities of Hospital Pharmacist in various hospitals of Lahore.
- To study the perception & expectation of health care providers & Patients towards Hospital Pharmacist.
- To study the differences between ideal & actual practices of hospital pharmacists.

4.2

- To study the importance of need of hospital pharmacists in public & private hospitals of Lahore.

3 STUDY DESIGN

An observational, cross-sectional and comparative study was conducted to observe the patients and health care provider's perception and expectation towards hospital pharmacists in Lahore. A specific Data Collection Form was designed for obtaining relevant data.

Type of Sampling: Random Sampling

Sample Size: Health Care Providers: 150; Patients: 100

Duration of study: 2 months

Location of Study: Different Public & Private Hospitals in Lahore city

Inclusion Criteria:

Health Care providers (Physician, Nurses, Pharmacists)

Patients (Adults both males & females)

Exclusion Criteria:

Children

Paramedical staff

Plan of Work: Topic "Patients and Health Care Provider's Perceptions and Expectations towards Hospital Pharmacist in Lahore" was assigned. Randomly 150 health care providers (Physician, nurses & Pharmacists) and 100 adult patients were randomly chosen from various public & private hospitals of Lahore. Three different data collection forms were designed; one for Physician & Nurses, one for Pharmacist & one for Patients. Data Collection Forms were filled by face to face interview. Data was collected & results were calculated & presented in the form of tables & graphs.

4 GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS OF RESULTS

4.1

Knowledge of Patients about Hospital Pharmacist

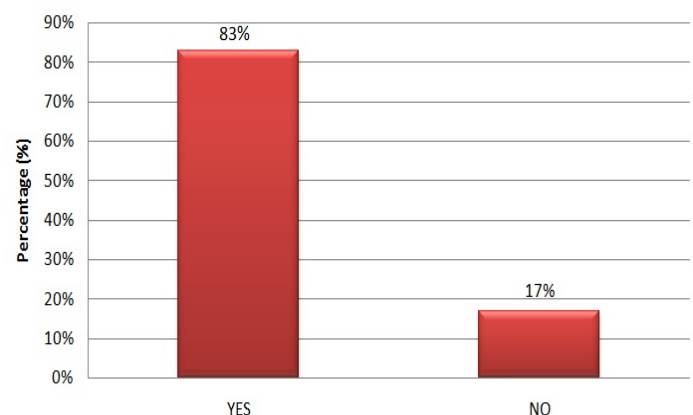


Fig. 4.1. (83%) of the randomly selected patients knew about the hospital pharmacist, while (17%) said that they had never seen any pharmacist.

- From Patients Perspective
- From Health Care Providers Perspective
- From Hospital Pharmacists Perspective

Patient's Perception of Hospital Pharmacist Duties

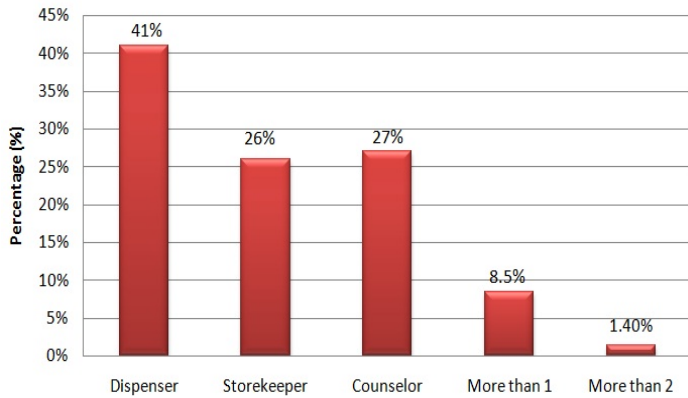


Fig.4.2. More than one = Dispenser, Storekeeper; More than two = All options.

4.3

Hospital Pharmacist importance in Health System according to Patient's perspective

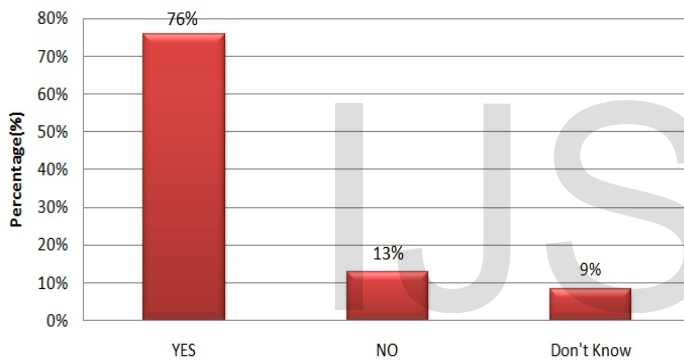


Fig. 4.4. (76%) of the patients believe that Hospital Pharmacists are an important part of our health care system; while only (13%) say that they don't meet the needs.

4.4

Knowledge of Health Care Providers about Hospital Pharmacist

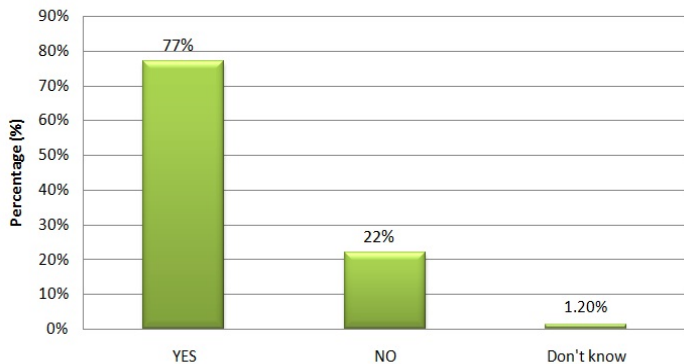


Fig. 6.4. (77%) of physician & nurses have never seen any hospital pharmacist while only (22%) claimed to have seen & known hospital pharmacist.

4.5

Hospital Pharmacist Importance in Health System according to Health Providers

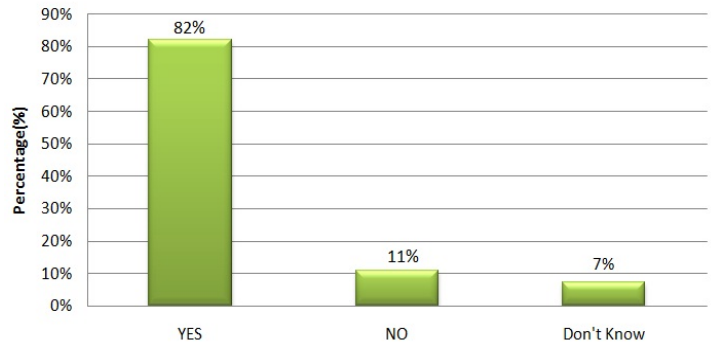


Fig.4.3. (82%) of the other health care providers believe in the importance of hospital pharmacists for the health care system; however (11%) don't believe in the same.

4.6

Health Care Providers Interaction with Hospital Pharmacists

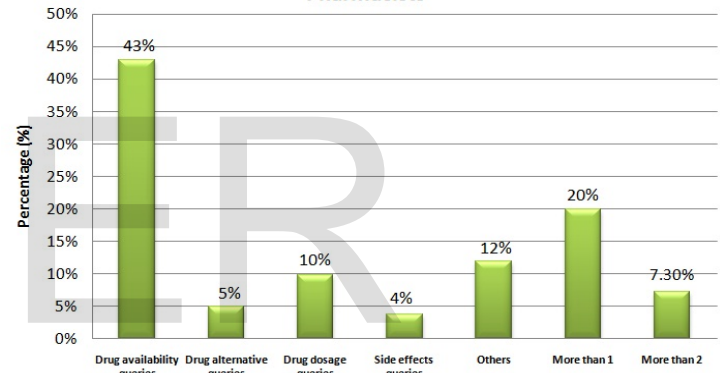


Fig.4.5 More than one (Drug alternative, Drug Interactions); More than two (Side effects, Drug Dosage, Drug interactions, others)

4.7

Possible Barriers in Hospital Pharmacist Duties according to Health Care Providers

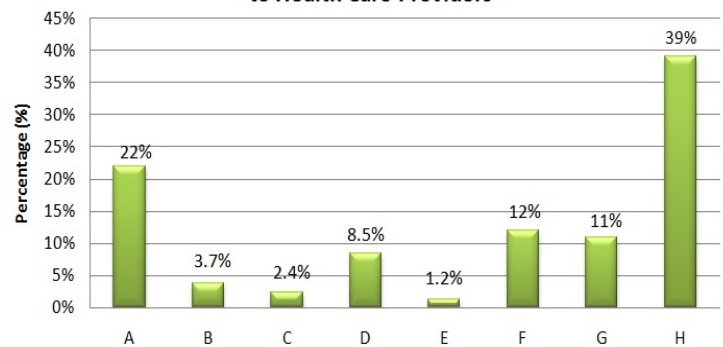


Fig.4.7. A = Over Burden, B = Lack of knowledge, C = Lack of confidence, D = Lack of awareness of other health providers, E = Insufficient facilities, F = Trust deficiency, G = Others, H = Including more than one options.

4.8

Hospital Pharmacist Duties

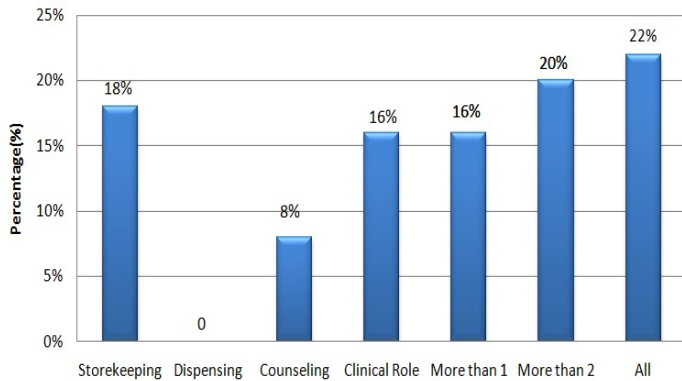


Fig.4.8. (22%) of the Hospital Pharmacist take their duties as being as storekeeper, dispenser as well as a counselor and having clinical roles; storekeeper (18%), Counselor (8%) & say to have Clinical Role (16%).

4.11

Possible Barriers faced by Hospital Pharmacist

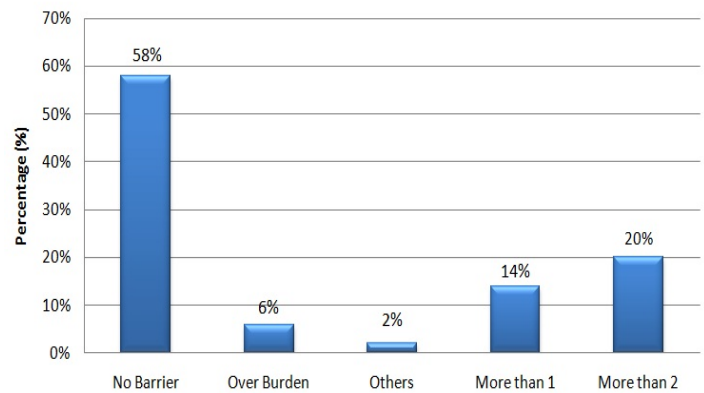


Fig.4.11. More than one (lack of patient's trust, lack of training); More than two (lack of time, lack of physician's trust, funding issues)

4.9

Hospital Pharmacist and Health Care Providers Relationship



Fig.4.9. (58%) of the hospital pharmacists believe to share satisfactory relationship with other health care providers, (36%) say that they share very good attitude with them & only (6%) said to have poor interaction with health care providers.

4.10

Hospital Pharmacist and Patients Relationship

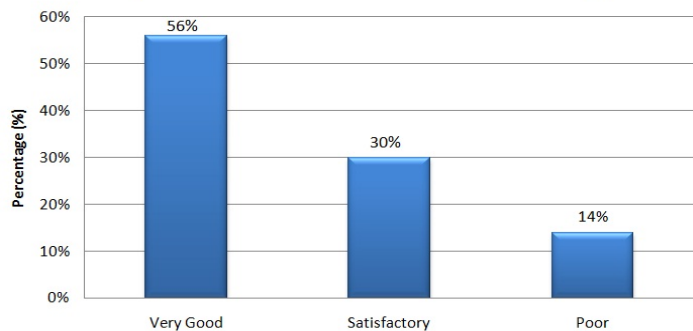


Fig.4.10. (56%) of the hospital pharmacists believe to share Very good relationship with Patients, (30%) say that they share satisfactory relationship, (14%) said to have poor interaction.

5 DISCUSSIONS

To study "Patient's and Health Care Provider's Perception and Expectation towards Hospital Pharmacist in Lahore" a total of 203 questionnaires were filled out of 250 by face to face interviews with patients and health care providers from different hospitals of Lahore including government and private sectors; 50 pharmacists, 71 patients & 82 physician & nurses responded. In our survey hospitals of government sector includes Services hospital, Punjab Institute of Cardiology, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Mayo Hospital, Jinnah Hospital, Sheikh Zayed Hospital and hospitals of private sector includes Omar Hospital, Mid City Hospital, Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital and Research Center, Fatima Memorial Hospital were visited.

(83%) of the randomly selected patients knew about the hospital pharmacist, while (17%) said that they had never seen any pharmacist. (41%) of the randomly selected adult patients perceive hospital pharmacist as dispensers; (26%) believe them they are storekeepers or (27%) say as counselors. Moreover, (8.5%) believe they could so both dispensing and storekeeping while only (1.4%) say they could perform all three functions. (76%) of the patients believe that Hospital Pharmacists are an important part of our health care system; while only (13%) say that they don't meet the needs.

(77%) of physician & nurses have never seen any hospital pharmacist while only (22%) claimed to have seen & known hospital pharmacist. (82%) of the other health care providers believe in the importance of hospital pharmacists for the health care system; however (11%) don't believe in the same. (43%) of the health care professionals says that they interact with the hospital pharmacist only for drug availability queries, (5%) for drug alternative queries, (10%) for drug dosage, (4%) for side effects queries, while (12%) says that they also have other reasons to do interactions. Moreover, about (20%) or (7.3%) admit to consult for more than one or two reasons as well. (1.2%) of the other health providers admit to have limited facilities being provided to the hospital pharmacist to perform

their duties well, (8.5%) claim to not have awareness about Pharmacists, (22%) pointed out about their over burden of duties; however (34%) complained hospital pharmacists being confidence less & not much knowledgeable.

(22%) of the Hospital Pharmacist take their duties being as storekeeper, dispenser as well as a counselor and having clinical roles; storekeeper (18%), Counselor (8%) & say to have Clinical Role (16%). (58%) of the hospital pharmacists believe to share satisfactory relationship with other health care providers, (36%) say that they share very good attitude with them & only (6%) said to have poor interaction with them. (56%) of the hospital pharmacists believe to share very good relationship with Patients, (30%) said satisfactory, (14%) said to have poor interaction. Around (58%) of Hospital Pharmacists stated to not face any barrier in performing their duties, while (6%) mentioned to get hindrance due to Over Burden & remaining few numbers of pharmacists mentioned to get restrained due to lack of trust of physician and patients as well as lack of their professional training & funds.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Pharmacy practice in different hospitals of Lahore is at its initial stages. In average population of Lahore the actual concept of hospital pharmacist is not very well known. Quite a few patients visiting to hospitals know about pharmacist and his actual role in hospital. Majorly they perceive a pharmacist as a medical representative, and those who know about hospital pharmacist; perceive him as a medical storekeeper or dispenser. They in fact are unaware of extensive role of hospital pharmacist and therefore their expectations are less from him. Whereas in case of health care providers including doctors and nursing staff, they know a hospital pharmacist are available only in pharmacy for record keeping and storekeeping but not for taking any active part in medication related issues except availability of medicines. Pharmacist does not interact with patients for counseling or to nursing staff for dosage administration or dosing frequency. In short there is no any actual practice of clinical pharmacist in hospital setting of Lahore except in few hospitals as Shaukat Khanum memorial hospital and Burn and Reconstructive Surgery Center in Jinnah hospital. Most of the Doctors claimed that they have not seen pharmacist in hospital at all. There are only few doctors who visit to pharmacist, for drug availability queries and very few for drug information. They do not even know about actual knowledge of pharmacist and therefore have not any interaction with pharmacist about drug information. Majority of doctors claimed that they would feel comfortable with the pharmacist if he would take part in ward rounds. Whereas as far as opinion of hospital pharmacist is concerned; majority of pharmacist are satisfied with their current performance in hospital settings. They even claimed that they have interaction with patients and other healthcare providers with a positive end response. And those who are not satisfied mentioned the barriers as over burden, funding issues and less number of pharmacists in hospital settings, lack of time, lack of trust of doctors and lack of their professional training.

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