Private vs. public pharmacist: Patients' experience on medication counselling

Lim Wan Lee1, Balu Deneshwary2, Mohamed Rosli Khalida1, Abdul Aziz Yasmin3, Mohd Ariffin Nurul Nasrah4, Kek Lih Ching5, Cheah Yuen Shin6, Chew Wei Yee7, Chiew Shoen Chuen8

1Pharmacy Department, Hospital Changkat Melintang, 2Pharmacy Department, Hospital Parik Buntar, 3Pharmacy Department, PKD Hilir Perak, 4Pharmacy Department, PKD Kuala Kangsar, 5Pharmacy Department, Hospital Raja Permaisuri Bainun, 6Pharmacy Department, Hospital Gerik, 7Pharmacy Department, Hospital Selama, 8Clinical Research Centre, Hospital Seri Manjung

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The provision of standard medication counselling points by pharmacists is crucial in ensuring optimal service delivery. This study aimed to evaluate patients' experience towards medication counselling services provided by public and private pharmacists. Methods: This cross-sectional study involving patients aged 18 years and above who have received medication counselling services from both sectors' pharmacists, was conducted at 14 government hospitals and 11 health clinics in Perak, in 2021-2022. Demography and patients' experience with medication counselling by both sectors' pharmacists were collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Results: A total of 428 subjects joined this study. Their median age was 46 (IQR: 24) years. The majority were Malay, female, civil servants and had tertiary education as the highest education level. The majority always obtained medications from government hospitals, followed by community pharmacies, health clinics and private clinics. More patients reported that public pharmacists always fulfil medication counselling points, than private pharmacists, across 30 items (p<0.001). More patients (89.5%) reported that public pharmacists always identify the prescription's owner's name, compared to private pharmacists (56.1%). Moreover, more patients reported that public pharmacists always review prescriptions before discussion (75.7% vs. 51.4%), and emphasize medication completion needs (68.4% vs. 44.6%), compared to private pharmacists (p<0.001). Only 40.2% of public pharmacists and 27.3% of private pharmacists always self-introduce before discussion. Conclusion: Public pharmacists have higher adherence to the medication counselling points compared to private pharmacists, from patients' experience. The gaps in medication counselling services, provide an opportunity to build a collaborative bridge between public and private pharmacists.