

Pharmacists' perceived barriers towards delivering their emergency roles during the COVID-19 pandemic and perceived policymakers' responsibilities

Iman Basheti¹, Razan Nassar¹, Muna Barakat¹, Raja'a Alqudah¹, Rana Abu Farha¹, Tareq Mukattash², Samar Thiab¹, and Bandana Saini³

¹Applied Science Private University

²Jordan University of Science and Technology

³The University of Sydney

May 13, 2020

Abstract

Rational: In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus infectious disease as a pandemic referred to as COVID-19. As an essential service, community pharmacists have been enacting a key role in patient counseling and supply of essential medicines and protective equipment. **Objectives:** To investigate pharmacists' perspectives of the role of educational institutes and professional pharmacy organizations in supporting them to take on roles during COVID-19 pandemic and to identify barriers to be able to support themselves and their patients. **Methods:** This descriptive mixed-method study was conducted via a cross-sectional online survey distributed to pharmacists/pharmacy students in Jordan during the COVID-19 outbreak (15-30 March 2020) using an online questionnaire, followed by an online focus group. Questionnaire items related to participants' perspectives in being prepared for and supported in their roles during the COVID-19 pandemic and items were tested for face validity. Data were descriptively analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and triangulated with focus group findings. **Results:** Considering that fear and anxiety are a consequence of mass social distancing/quarantine, study participants (n=726, age=26.9 (SD=8.0) years, 71.9% females), reported needing training on mental healthcare to be able to support themselves and people during pandemics (90.2%). Most respondents agreed/strongly agreed (59.7%) with the statement around pharmacy educators/educational institutes having a key role in preparing pharmacists for practice during epidemics/pandemics, and agreed that their faculties should add a course regarding pandemic preparedness in their curriculum (89.9%). Results were similar regarding roles for the pharmaceutical associations. Focus group findings (n=7) mirrored the survey findings to a large extent. **Conclusions:** Most participants believed that Pharmacy Educators and pharmaceutical associations have a role in preparing them to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic through online educational workshops/webinars. Online education on mental healthcare is specifically needed.

Hosted file

JECP_Policy makers and COVID-19 Manuscript.docx available at <https://authorea.com/users/310289/articles/450838-pharmacists-perceived-barriers-towards-delivering-their-emergency-roles-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-perceived-policymakers-responsibilities>