

Start time: 7: 10

End Time: 7:43

Important Notes:

Pharmacists' Working Conditions and Stress Levels (& Current Events)

-What will be discussed: Current conditions w/ working conditions, why pharmacists are stressed, and solutions (with student discussion afterwards)

-44h/week working hours for pharmacists, shifts worked on their feet (especially in retail settings) and include nights, weekends, holidays

-43% reported insomnia, 27% depression, 11% excessive drinking, 6% suicidal thoughts reported C+D survey after because of the increase of working hours

-Stressed conditions are dangerous because...

-More pharm errors, less focus/motivation, difficulty making decisions

-Lower patient care and quality = important to address the factor

- **Question:** Things that could happen that would affect patient care and safety when stress conditions are increased
 - **Person 1:** Given wrong prescription
 - Affect verification
 - **Person 2:** Forget to write up the side effects of the medication and mention it to the patient
 - Papers are forgotten as they stack up
- **Question:** What do you think about the working conditions of the pharmacy? Would stress levels be different in different areas of pharmacy?
 - **Person 1:** Friend worked in hospital and got super stressed. Quit and works at Walgreens and is feeling a lot less stressed
- **Question:** What working field would you like to go into/did you compare the stress levels of the setting?
 - **Person 1:** Working in retail = customer service makes it not a good experience = wants to work in hospital setting

Reasons pharmacists are stressed:

-Shortage of pharmacists b/c pharmacy is a business = replacement of high pay workers with lower paid workers (pharm tech/no pharm license). Treatment increases responsibilities of the existing pharmacist

Mentioned Dr. Poole and how she was pregnant. Worked super hard, no pay increase (this was in 2020). She fainted at work b/c of sleep deprivation and no co-worker found her until a customer called for a pharmacist. Then they searched for her and found that she was on the floor. Her and the baby were alright, but the incident showed that there should be more pharmacists hired as a solution to fix the problem. In general, after 2020, the demand of the role

of the pharmacy in a community increased, so more pharmacists and staff were hired. This is the general approach in retail settings

Pharmacist's role expanded: Pandemic = pharmacists required to give immunizations in addition to regular jobs; additional work increased their stress level

Mental health issues: PTSD increased. More than 60% pharm report experience a high level of burnout in the practice

- Question: What is the reason of the increase load of the pharmacist in the past few years?
 - **Person 1**: Pandemic = more people sick = more prescriptions filled. Vaccine came out = everyone wanted to get vaccinated at the same time
 - **Person 2**: Stress of pandemic on top of the stress of supporting family during the trying time
 - **Person 3**: Going to work when pandemic high = taking risk of being in contact w sick people and then going home taking that illness home = worry that they're bringing illness home to their family
- Question: What could retail pharmacy do to decrease stress/burnout
 - **Person 1**: Hire more, align roles of the pharm tech/pharmacy more. Increase of hours
 - **Person 2**: Increase the pay, other work benefits

Solutions: Approaches that have been taken

-Coach-led intervention: Mental health support. Provides newly registered pharmacists a psychosocial support to help them to become professional. Recently graduated pharm matched w experienced pharmacists (similar to a mentorship program). Participating pharmacists had a high level of autonomy and job satisfaction reported after participating in the mentorship

-Solution to help new pharmacists in difficult times

-Report prescription verification: Allow pharmacists to remotely review and enter prescription information. CVS equipped the tech in over 8k US stores, but has a problem. No state pharmacist board will allow the pharmacists to execute certain crucial tasks remotely b/c of privacy. Some states have regulations prohibiting remote drug verification

-Tech support instead of mental support outside of the problems; pros and cons

-Pharmapod's Platform: Tech support. Cloud based software for reducing patient safety incidents in community pharmacies, long-term care and hospitals. Provides a way to record med-related events in the practice. AI helps pharmacist carry out the effective root-cause analysis so the pharmacist doesn't have to actively due that. Build by actual healthcare professionals to reduce work of the pharmacist.

- Question: Which approach is most effective at improving the working conditions/stress levels
 - **Person 1**: Remote prescription is most effective. Still them doing it; is more time efficient
 - **Person 2**: Remote prescription also. Pros outweigh the cons
 - **Person 3**: Remote prescription also is a good pro. Pharmapod is also interesting b/c decreases responsibility of pharmacist
 - **Person 4**: Mentorship is a good thing. Get input from that to help you
 - **Person 5**: Remote prescription helpful b/c time efficient. The pharmacist has all the records/still them verifying.
 - **Person 6**: Pharmapods would take pressure off the pharmacist as well as the remoteness of the remote prescription verification.
 - **Person 7**: Remote prescription decreases workload; hire one in person and hire another remotely. Pharmapods might take over the work of pharmacists if the tech can do everything.
 - **Person 8**: Retain a little bit of information if a pharmacist is in person telling you about the medication. Still need a human to work in the pharmacy even if Pharmapods or AI takes over a role in the pharmacy
 - **Person 9**: Pharmapods is interesting but not sure how efficient it would be
 - **Person 10**: Hiring more. Augment pharmacist's role instead of taking over it completely via AI
- Question: Any other approaches to this situation?
 - **Person 1**: Hire more people/add more hours to decrease the stress levels
- Other engaging comments:
 - **Person 1**: % of stress etc showed, but has it been compared to national average?
 - **Host**: No b/c just taken in the field of pharmacy. Assuming it is higher than average. Stress associated with higher amounts according to the survey