

Clinical Practice Updates

[Community Care and Specialty Pharmacist Clinics]



Background Information

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Institution	Khoo Teck Puat Hospital
Area of Specialty (if any)	Community Care and Specialty Pharmacist Clinics (Cardiology, Anticoagulation, and Renal)
Years of Experience in Pharmacy/ Specialty area	7 years

Introduction

What are some of your day to day duties e.g. special services, rounds that are offered in your pharmacy?
(Word limit: 100 words)

I work with the Aging In Place- Community Care Team (AIP-CCT) which is a multidisciplinary team that provides home care to patients. As a pharmacist in the team, I participate in multidisciplinary meetings and provide input on medication management for the patients. On occasions where the nurses identify patients with medication adherence, medication hoarding or polypharmacy issues, I will also visit patients in their home to address these issues. On days when I am not on AIP-CCT duty, I will be at the Outpatient Pharmacy or running specialist pharmacist clinics including the Cardiology Pharmacist Clinic, Renal Pharmacist Clinic or Smoking Cessation Clinic.

Practice Updates

As one of the pioneer hospital pharmacists delivering community care services, what are some of the resources e.g. guidelines, therapies, disease states management, skillsets which you would like to highlight to fellow pharmacists who want to learn more about your field of practice? Please elaborate.
(Word limit: 100 words)

When we visit patients at home, we see a whole range of patients from those with multiple comorbidities, end stage organ failure to geriatric syndrome. However, when it comes to medications, the patients we see usually have the same common issues - poor adherence, polypharmacy and poor understanding of medications. Other than being up to date on the latest guidelines on disease management, I think it is important to work on improving soft skills to address the medication-related issues that our patients face. These include learning how to identify issues with medication adherence (through using tools like the Morisky Medication adherence scale), practice motivational interviewing, and often thinking creatively on ways to improve compliance with medication administration aids, colorful labels - anything that works!

Challenges Faced

What are some of the challenges that pharmacists working in your specialty might face and what are the approaches to overcome these challenges? (Word limit: 100 words)

Our work relies on good communication, and in multi-racial Singapore, language is a huge barrier for me. When I go for a home visit, it is always important to first check with the nurses what is the patient's spoken language to ensure I can communicate effectively with the patient at home. I will then ensure I have someone who can speak the language to come along with me. Another challenge is the lack of funding in this area of work. Pharmacists are not as well-recognized as home care providers as nurses are. With the institution's understanding of the necessity of these visits, I hope in time to come there will be better funding for pharmacists to conduct home visits.

Any Other Sharing

Is there anything else that you would like to share e.g. words of advice regarding your specialty? (Word limit: 100 words)

Since I started visiting patients at home, it has changed the way I work at clinics as well as the outpatient pharmacy. Seeing how patients manage at home puts things in a different perspective and it makes you re-think about the way we do our daily work like how you counsel patients, how you titrate medications at clinic, and even how you label the medications. It is an eye-opening experience for me and I believe a useful exposure for all pharmacists. It is not for the faint-hearted as some homes can be very dirty and you will be surprised at what you will find. But ultimately the time spent with the patients is always appreciated and no other setting can give you that same sense of fulfillment.

Thank you for your contribution to the development of fellow pharmacists!