Evaluating the Roles and Responsibilities of Pharmacy Technicians in Iowa

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Outline

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Pharmacy Technician roles continue to expand in pharmaceutical care services.
A variety of skills are required of pharmacy technicians.
Pharmacy technicians can help aid pharmacists with the expansion of their roles and responsibilities (put in a citation).
This can be accomplished through educational programs, advanced certifications and additional practice guidelines.
The roles of pharmacists are evolving, and as pharmacists are moving towards patient-centered care, the roles of pharmacy technicians are also changing. Technicians are now relied upon to provide support to the pharmacist, in order to help achieve positive patient outcomes.
Objectives of this project

- Discuss the current roles of pharmacy technicians in different practice settings.
- Collect data via surveys to determine areas that may need improvement in the fields of community and hospital pharmacy.
- Assess and quantify the responses received from the survey.
- Recommend areas and suggestions that can be implemented to improve the current roles and structures of pharmacy technicians in certain fields.
Methods

- The primary goal of this project was to assess the current roles and responsibilities of pharmacy technicians, and potential for growth.
- We developed two sets of surveys, specifically designed for pharmacies in institutional settings and community pharmacies.
Before we developed the survey questions, we did a review on current literature to find more information on the roles of pharmacy technicians.

Additionally, we met with one of the Pharmacy Technicians Supervisors at UIHC, who helped provide additional information on the roles of technicians at UIHC.
Methods continued

- These surveys were sent out to different Institutional and Community pharmacies in Iowa.
- Responses were sent and recorded through Qualtrics.
- These surveys provided us with input from pharmacists in regards to potential areas for growth.
Procedures

Survey questions were on the following topic areas:

- Demographics (of the Institution or pharmacy)
- Different types of trainings provided to technicians.
- Duties performed by pharmacy technicians
- Duties requiring advanced clinical skill sets
- Any additional roles or duties
We received responses from 9 different Institutions from around Iowa. All 9 of these Institutions were critical access hospitals. Some of the locations are listed below:

- Ottumwa, Manning, Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Osceola, Decorah, Chariton, and West Union.
- The number of beds per Institution ranged from 17-200.
In regards to training and job education provided to technicians, in the institutional setting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>This is something currently being done</th>
<th>This is not currently being done</th>
<th>This is something I see happening in the future</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>On site formal training program</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>On site informal training program</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Test-based certifications</td>
<td>62.50%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Supplemental online learning videos?</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Continuing education sessions</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>50.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In regards to Pharmacy technicians performing various duties:

- 100% of respondents stated that technicians perform the following duties:
  - Filling unit doses, delivering and restocking medications, and resolving controlled substance discrepancies.
- Many institutions were trending towards an expansion of roles for technicians.
In regards to duties requiring advances clinical skills:

We were interested in learning more about pharmacist opinions on the following skills:

- Communicating with members of the interdisciplinary team, helping to optimize a medication regimen, assisting the pharmacist with monitoring parameters, checking for common drug interactions.
Select one or more from the options below:

- Communicate with members of the interdisciplinary team
- Help optimize a medication regimen
- Interact with members of nursing facilities as a liaison
- Assist the pharmacist with basic patient monitoring parameters
- Check for common drug interactions
- Perform adherence coaching
- Chart review of prescription dispensing
- Act as support staff during Codes/Emergent situations
- Perform tech-check-tech
- Round with the pharmacist
- Drug administration

This is something currently being done
This is not currently being done
This is something I see happening in the future
N/A
Results (Institutions) Cont.

- Of note:
  - 1 respondent (n=8), 11.1% marked “This is something I see happening in the future”: to technicians helping to optimize a medication regimen, assisting with basic monitoring parameters, or performing adherence coaching.
  - 2 respondents (n=8) marked “This is something I see happening in the future” to checking for common drug interactions (22.22%)
Additional Information or comments from respondents regarding roles/duties not mentioned:

- Inventory management
- 340B auditing, and maintenance
- Watching for drug shortages
Future Directions

- Our project was limited to Iowa.
- To gain a better understanding of different areas for growth, it may be beneficial to expand the search to a greater population.
Future Directions

- Through the information from this survey, we found that the roles of technicians are expanding.
- Although there are no defined roles outlined, many institutions and pharmacies are gravitating towards incorporating technicians into more roles.
What questions do you have?