

BACKGROUND

The practice of pharmacy continues to evolve in a healthcare system that is ever seeking to deliver care in the most cost-efficient manner. In recent years, there has been increased attention on the standardization of training for pharmacy technicians; the United States currently sees wide variations from state to state. At the same time, there has also been a noted expansion in select states regarding the roles of pharmacy technicians and their scope of legal responsibilities. For example, some states have passed legislation that eliminates the pharmacist as the final check in the dispensing process before a medication is distributed to the patient. In this scenario, a pharmacy technician performs the final verification step. There are a mix of attitudes in the general population, and among pharmacists regarding these changes.

OBJECTIVES

Primary objective: Discern the familiarity and comfort level of Ohio licensed pharmacists with regard to the national trend for an expanding role of pharmacy technicians.

Secondary objective: Perform a subgroup analysis to identify any predictive demographics for registered pharmacists in Ohio.

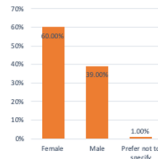
METHODS

Registered Ohio pharmacists were contacted via email and asked to complete an anonymous Google survey. The survey was open for a two week period, with a reminder email sent halfway through this period. Respondents provided their age, gender, pharmacy degree(s), state in which the pharmacy degree was earned, school, practice setting, and their primary practice site. OPA membership was also assessed. They then answered several questions regarding knowledge of technician laws. Finally, participants then responded to questions which assessed the comfort level of the pharmacist a) with a tech-check-tech program, b) to allow technicians to administer vaccines, c) to allow technicians to take verbal, transfer, or clarification of prescriptions over the phone, and finally, they were asked whether national standards should be set for pharmacy technicians. We compared responses to these questions to their demographics to determine whether any characteristics correlated with knowledge or attitude. Ordinal logistic regression was used to assess data, with a p-value of <0.05 considered statistically significant.

REFERENCES

RESULTS

GENDER

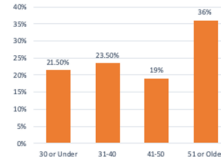


PUBLISHED STUDIES PROVE ACCURACY OF TECH PRESCRIPTION VERIFICATION

TRUE* FALSE



AGE

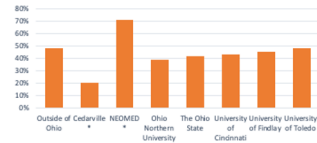


PHARMACY IS THE ONLY MEDICAL PROFESSION WITHOUT NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR TECHS

TRUE* FALSE



% GRADUATES IN FAVOR OF TECH-CHECK-TECH



OHIO HAS NO ENTRY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS OVERSEEN BY THE BOARD FOR TECHS

TRUE* FALSE



- With regard to the comfort level of workplaces implementing Tech Check Tech the following groups were significantly more likely to be in favor of the implementation: <30 and >50 YO men and 41-50 YO women
- Women >50 YO were significantly less likely to be in favor of technicians performing verbals, transfers, and clarifications over the phone.
- No group showed a statistically significant difference in comfort level of technicians administering vaccines.
- Ohio Pharmacist Association (OPA) membership did not correlate to the comfort level or knowledge of any category versus any of the comparators.

*Correct Answer

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with a goal of determining the familiarity and comfort level of Ohio pharmacists with regard to the national trend for expanding pharmacy technician roles. Five hundred fifty-seven pharmacists responded. The practice of pharmacy in Ohio has been traditionally conservative, yet half of the respondents believed technician roles should expand. We were surprised to observe that a significant portion (~50%) of respondents were not aware of the current laws governing technicians, including administering immunizations or taking verbals, clarifications, and transfers by phone, with no particular demographic factor correlated to this. Of note, NEOMED graduates were more likely, and Cedarville graduates were less likely to support tech-check-tech practices. Possible underlying factors for this may be a future area of investigation. To our knowledge, this study was the first of its kind in Ohio, and included over 500 respondents. It was not, however, without limitations. For example, age was collected as categorical rather than continuous data. This may have limited the ability to identify a correlation between age and responses to various questions. Also, the only professional organization listed was the Ohio Pharmacists Association (OPA), however there are multiple other pharmacy organizations in Ohio in which membership may correlate to attitudes and responses. Practice site, however, was collected, and it was not correlated to knowledge or attitude responses. Ohio pharmacists' support and knowledge were divided regarding national trends for an expanded role of pharmacy technicians. Very few demographic characteristics were correlated with knowledge or support for this trend. Nationally, the scope of practice for pharmacy technicians continues to expand. If Ohio pharmacists desire to influence the role of pharmacy technicians in their state, these results suggest a need for increased education in order to inform their opinions and recommendations.

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