
RESEARCH PROJECT

PROPOSAL

**Patient's General Perception and Attitude
toward Pharmacist in UAE**

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1. Background

Certainly, developing health services and providing health care to all members of society is an important goal of economic and social progress and development, as it is a necessity for economic and social development. Pharmaceutical services are among the most important health services, which play a key role in the prevention and treatment of diseases in society.

The social goal of the United Arab Emirates in the field of health is for all residents to reach a healthy level that allows them to live a healthy and calm life and to exercise their role in society in a normal way, as the state is primarily responsible for the health of citizens, and it must provide all health care requirements, whether through institutions Government health or private health institutions.

From this point of view, the pharmacist plays a prominent role in protecting the health of citizens within the framework of the UAE health system, as he is the main component in this health system because of his direct dealings with patients, and for his specialized knowledge in the health and pharmaceutical field, as the actual practice of the profession.

The pharmacy mainly supports the health care system for patients, and forms an important part in completing the process of treating patients, because direct and daily contact occurs due to the permanent presence of the pharmacist in his pharmacy in order to secure the necessary medicines and necessary information for patients, in addition to responding to patients' inquiries regarding how to use Medicines, the contraindications of some medicines, medicines that should not be taken with other medicines because they are incompatible with each other, and many other cases in which patients benefit from pharmacists.

This is mainly due to the fact that the pharmacist is fully conversant with the composition and preparation of medicines, and he is the one who knows the level of side effects of medicines, antagonisms and interactions with other medicines, as well as aware of the kinetics of medicine with food, so the pharmacist assures everyone that the patient's interest lies in consulting Pharmacist in all pharmaceutical matters.

Therefore, his contribution to the development of health services is effective because he is in constant contact with members of the community. Therefore, the profession of pharmacy is considered one of the important professions in the health system.

However, it is worth noting that societies have defined the profession of the pharmacist as the person who prepares, installs and dispenses medicines, and this profession has developed, so the role of the pharmacist is to manage pharmaceutical institutions, dispense medicine, and provide patients with the necessary information regarding medicines and their use, so the pharmacist carries a great burden in developing the profession and increasing its quality and importance. Consequently, the pharmaceutical sciences are constantly evolving, especially with the scientific and technological development in this era.

For example, the development of biopharmaceutical techniques, as well as vaccines resulting from genetic engineering, as well as the emergence of new methods of drug administration, require the pharmacist to keep pace with this tremendous scientific progress, and this can only be achieved by continuous education of the pharmacist, with the need to move from the concept of Pharmaceutical services to pharmaceutical care because it is the most comprehensive.

Therefore, the perception of patients towards pharmacists and their behavior towards them is one of the important matters that needs to be studied directly, so that important results can be reached on this subject, and recommendations are given for the benefit of the gathering of pharmacists and academics in this field.

2. Statement of the problem

The research problem becomes clear in the problems facing patients regarding their interaction with pharmacists in the United Arab Emirates, where the pharmaceutical service is part of the medical service, so many patients suffer from not receiving the correct and assumed advice from the pharmacist when they dispense the drug from the pharmacy, and at the same time there are many Pharmacists are not fully aware of the nature of their work, and the tasks and duties entrusted to them regarding their dealings with patients.

So, the following is the main question of this research: -

What are the tasks and roles that pharmacists are supposed to perform towards patients in the UAE society?

3. Literature Review

Pharmacists are frequently considered among the most trustworthy professionals, and research demonstrates that pharmacist services are widely appreciated. According to studies, the general public is uninformed of a pharmacist's broad range of functions and responsibilities. The goal of this study was to learn more about the public's perceptions of the function of the community pharmacist and to see how likely they are to use extended pharmacist services (Kelly, et Al., 2014).

The Saudi healthcare system is undergoing huge changes, and pharmacists will be given increased responsibilities in the delivery of healthcare services. As a result, the goal of this study Almohammed, et Al., (2021) was to determine public perceptions and attitudes regarding pharmacists, as well as public satisfaction with pharmacists' practices and services in the community pharmacy setting.

Alomi, Y., et Al, (2018), One of the studies investigated patients' perceptions and attitudes toward pharmacists in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by conducting a 4-month cross-sectional survey of

patients' perceptions of pharmacists. The survey was divided into two parts: the first collects demographic data, and the second contains 49 questions divided into four areas: The first field is concerned with the patient's overall impression of the pharmacist; the second area is concerned with the patient's impression of pharmaceutical care services; the third area is concerned with the patient's impression of an ambulatory care visit; the fourth category refers to the patient's assessment of the pharmacist's relationship and counselling skills, and the participants' responses were collected using a 5-point Likert response scale system, with questions ranging from open to closed. The poll was sent out via social media to a general hospital in the Al-Ahsa district with a capacity of 500 beds, as well as a mobile care pharmacy. To assess the first survey, study implementers performed many interviews with patients utilizing electronic survey forms. Patients' opinions and conduct are clearly influenced by pharmacists' performance.

Furthermore, the relationship between physicians and patients is known to influence patient health outcomes and overall satisfaction with the health care service, and the same is assumed for pharmacists and their relationships with patients, to explore the public's view of health and accept medical recommendations from health care providers, including pharmacists, it is necessary to have a positive perception and attitude towards them (Almohammed, et Al., 2021).

The following table shows the number of the medical team with all specialties in the United Arab Emirates, which consists of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and paramedics, distributed over the years from 2015 to 2019, which is the last year for which data is available (Annual Statistical Report, 2018).

Table (1) Number of Health Services Employees by Sector, 2014-2019

Item	Sector	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
No. of Physicians	Government	8,879	8,424	8,322	7,018	6,952
	Private	16,535	15,921	14,785	15,177	13,529
	Total	25,414	24,345	23,107	22,195	20,481
No. of Dentists	Government	885	845	841	751	737
	Private	5,691	5,428	4,848	4,414	4,179
	Total	6,576	6,273	5,689	5,165	4,916
No. of Pharmacists	Government	1,862	1,805	1,814	1,122	1,159
	Private	9,965	6,664	6,116	5,749	4,088
	Total	11,827	8,469	7,930	6,871	5,247
No. of Nurses	Government	21,048	20,098	20,480	16,453	16,832
	Private	35,094	35,060	33,435	35,324	29,323
	Total	56,142	55,158	53,915	51,777	46,155
No. of Paramedics	Government	10,324	9,693	9,540	7,220	7,059
	Private	15,604	14,183	12,712	14,235	10,759
	Total	25,928	23,876	22,252	21,455	17,818

The table indicates that the number of pharmacists in the UAE reached 11827 pharmacists in 2019, distributed over the government sector with the number of 1862 pharmacists, and the private sector with the number of 9965 pharmacists.

The following table shows the number of the medical team in all specialties in the United Arab Emirates, which consists of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, nurses and paramedics distributed across the Emirates. Each emirate and the number of pharmacists working in this medical team is shown in 2019, which is the last year for which there are data Available (Annual Statistical Report, 2018).

Table (2) Number of Health Services Employees by Emirate by Sector, 2019

Item	Sector	TOTAL	Fujairah	R.A.K.	U.A.Q.	Ajman	Sharjah	Dubai	Abu Dhabi
No. of Physicians	Government	8,879	339	479	230	323	907	2,026	4,575
	Private	16,535	215	306	30	555	1,850	7,985	5,594
	Total	25,414	554	785	260	878	2,757	10,011	10,169
No. of Dentists	Government	885	47	35	17	28	152	228	378
	Private	5,691	116	184	36	279	737	2,369	1,970
	Total	6,576	163	219	53	307	889	2,597	2,348
No. of Pharmacists	Government	1,862	37	66	33	50	100	366	1,210
	Private	9,965	202	339	75	593	1,521	4,204	3,031
	Total	11,827	239	405	108	643	1,621	4,570	4,241
No. of Nurses	Government	21,048	742	1,225	545	707	2,025	5,024	10,780
	Private	35,094	350	502	63	886	2,836	13,717	16,740
	Total	56,142	1,092	1,727	608	1,593	4,861	18,741	27,520
No. of Paramedics	Government	10,324	412	574	188	244	1,032	2,718	5,156
	Private	15,604	267	393	195	556	1,748	7,453	4,992
	Total	25,928	679	967	383	800	2,780	10,171	10,148

The table indicates that the number of pharmacists in the UAE amounted to 11827 in 2019, distributed over each emirate, and the number in which they work.

With the breadth of pharmacy practice expanding at such a rapid rate, it is necessary to assess how pharmacists are seen by the general population, as well as their desire to use increased pharmacy services. There is a necessity to discover that most people have a decent awareness of what pharmacists do and regard pharmacists as trustworthy health care practitioners. There is a desire for additional pharmacy services, albeit some services are more in demand than others. Users of pharmacy services on a regular basis were more aware about and interested in extended offerings (Kelly, et Al., 2014).

The new pharmacy paradigm has shifted pharmacists' focus away from products and toward patients. This shift has resulted in a new set of ideas and beliefs about how pharmacy clients should be treated. The major goal of this survey was to find out how community pharmacists in Dubai felt about their current job. The key findings reveal that community pharmacists are more concerned with business than patients. They sell practically all over-the-counter medications without requiring a prescription. In Dubai, however, a new trend for pharmacists is to provide improved pharmaceutical services such as on-demand advice to patients (Rayes, I., et Al., 2015).

This study used a cross-sectional survey done in June 2012 during an awareness campaign organized in two commercial locations in Riyadh for two days, where a three-part self-questionnaire was handed to the guests who accepted to participate in the study. Where 204 questionnaires were collected, 76 percent stated that doctors or pharmacists do not encourage them to report adverse drug reactions that may occur while taking their medications, and the majority of respondents (73.2%) believed that the medical team, not the patient, should report drug interactions. When asked why patients did not report ADRs (Adverse Drug Reactions), 19.1 (48.5 percent) said they didn't know if the ADR was caused by the medicine or not, and 18.1 (46.1 percent) said they didn't know about the ADR. Patients do not believe in pharmacovigilance, according to 16 (40.7 %) Sales, I., et Al., (2017).

The pharmacist's function in the community is shifting away from drug formulation and dispensing and toward providing drug information and patient care. As a result, pharmacists must be able to discuss with patients. Many continuing education programs have been designed to strengthen the pharmacist's position in the community and to improve patient education and counselling abilities, like The purpose of this study is to determine community pharmacists' attitudes and behaviors toward patient counselling and pharmacist continuing education programs in Iraq. From January to April 2018, a cross-sectional survey was done on a suitable sample of community pharmacists from several governorates in Iraq. Data was gathered using a specially constructed, pre-tested questionnaire adapted from a prior study to represent the nature of work in Iraq. Most pharmacists provide advice to patients and fill prescriptions in one to five minutes. Approximately (53%) of pharmacists place a greater emphasis on the drug's dose during dispensing than on its duration (19%) or indication (21%), but almost half of patients inquire primarily about their indications.

Only roughly a third of the patients were asked about their drug dosage. Almost half of the participants (47%) believe that attending continuing pharmacy education programs can help them enhance their counselling practice, and the majority of them believe that these programs are important for their career's future. Such programs, according to the majority of the participants, are extremely unusual in Iraq. The majority of community pharmacists in Iraq had a positive outlook on patient counselling and continuing pharmacy education programs, according to this study (Mohammed, S., et Al., 2019).

4. Project Objectives

The main objective of this study is to assess the perception and behavior of patients towards pharmacists in the United Arab Emirates.

So, the researcher seeks to achieve the following objectives: -

- ✓ Assessment of patients' perceptions and behavior towards pharmacists.
- ✓ Providing a theoretical and field framework for the duties and tasks that pharmacists are supposed to perform towards patients in society.
- ✓ Explore the main obstacles that hinder the work of pharmacists in order to perform their role properly and provide the necessary consultations to patients in the UAE society.

5. Project Hypothesis

The researcher seeks to achieve the following hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis

H1: There is no statistically significant relationship between patients' perception and attitude and the performance of pharmacists in the UAE society at a significant level of 0.05.

Alternative Hypothesis

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between patients' perception and attitude and the performance of pharmacists in the UAE society at a significant level of 0.05.

6. Target Population (Sampling Technique and Sample Size)

The study population consists of hospital pharmacists in different public and private hospitals in Emirates, the study used the simple random sampling method, through the study tool represented in the electronic questionnaire form.

Sample selection is the process of selecting a sample in order to gather information about a population, so the simple random sample method is the method that has been used in this study. The study population was chosen to be from hospital pharmacists who work in hospitals, as well as university students and doctors in the United Arab Emirates, and the sample will be selected in a simple random way, within 200 item.

7. Data Collection Approach

In collecting, classifying, presenting, analyzing, and interpreting data, the researcher will use a descriptive analytical technique. In the theoretical section, library and Internet sources were employed to gather facts and information. The questionnaire was created using many scales to assess pharmacists' activities and responsibilities, as well as patients' perceptions and conduct toward pharmacists.

The study will use the electronic questionnaire form as a tool for the field study, which aimed to identify the impact of pharmacist on the perception and attitude of the patients in Emirates, the questionnaire included three parts, where the first section dealt with personal characteristics, like gender, age, education, while the second part of the questionnaire regarding the independent variable while the third part regarding the dependent variable, then references.

8. Data Analysis

The study will use the spss23 and the excel file of the data will be obtained. The study will also use a set of statistical methods (Alpha coefficient – Frequencies - percentages, mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient, and Regression coefficient) to analyze the data.

The following are the most relevant statistical indicators used in this study:

1. The questionnaire's validity and reliability index (Cronbach's alpha coefficient), which indicates the extent to which the data extracted from the questionnaire is valid and reliable, as well as the degree to which it is relied upon in making decisions about research hypotheses and generalizing the results.
2. The mean, median, mode, and standard deviation indexes help demonstrate the data's consistency.
3. Correlation strength index, which indicates how closely the items and axes of the questionnaire are related.
4. T-test indicator, which shows the presence of differences in the averages of the variables and allows you to determine if the study hypotheses are accepted or rejected by looking at the degree of significance.
5. ANOVA analysis indicator, to illustrate the magnitude of differences in the averages of the variables and to determine the acceptance or rejection of the research hypotheses n by looking at the level of significant.

9. Potential Scope of the Project

The study is an attempt to continue research efforts in the field of pharmacist influence on patients' perceptions and behavior. The results of the study will highlight the key performance of pharmacists, how they perform their work, and the basic tasks required of them.

The results of the study aimed at evaluating the effect of pharmacists and their performance by measuring the patients' perception and behavior towards them. Therefore, the study results dealt with awareness of patients' perceptions and behavior towards pharmacists, which allows managers and pharmacist leaders to formulate policies to enhance the quality level of pharmacists and the services they provide to members of the community.

10. Project Implementation Plan (Time Frame)

Activity	Duration
Intro + Topic	Week 1 - 2
Proposal	Week 3
Literature review	Week 4 – 5 – 6
Methodology	Week 7 – 8
Data collection + Analyze	Week 9 – 10
Report writing	Week 11 – 12
Submission of final Report	Week 13 - 14

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