Communicating the benefits and risk of medicines to patients: The pharmacy student’s point of view

Andrew A. Brown, PharmD Candidate, 2014

Temple University School of Pharmacy
Philadelphia, PA USA

Abstract

Background

Understanding the benefit-risk (BR) profile of a medicine is a key aspect of ensuring that the appropriate medicine is being used for the patient. The FDA and European Medicines Agency have made BR assessment and communication a standard part of the curriculum to be assessed by student pharmacists. This study was an online pilot survey designed to assess how students are being taught to evaluate the BR profile of medicines. The study aimed to examine current BR teaching strategies.

To better understand whether pharmacy students are being prepared for these challenges, we have undertaken a survey of 5th and 6th year students and their respective schools. Participants completed an online pilot survey designed to assess how students are being taught to evaluate the BR profile of medicines. The study aimed to examine current BR teaching strategies.

Methods

Aims and Objectives

Methods

Faculty believed their institutions could improve by:

- Promoting more information that is available on the topic
- Increasing interactive nature of role play exercises (2 schools)
- Providing students more explicit curricula on the topic
- Providing more practical exposure to patients and healthcare professionals

Faculty and students were asked in which courses did they teach (faculty) and which courses student felt they were actually taught BR assessment.

Where do you think improvements can be made to your program to better prepare your students?

- Providing more practical exposure to patients and healthcare professionals - 33%
- Increasing interactive nature of role play exercises - 67%
- Providing more explicit curricula on the topic - 67%
- Providing more practical exposure to patients and healthcare professionals - 67%

Students were asked what techniques they believed were the most effective at communicating the benefits and risks associated with a specific therapy.

- Use of standardized assessment tools - 33%
- Communication of counseling patients in a consistent approach - 67%
- Use of pharmacy practice lab - 67%
- Use of professional practice lab - 67%

Students were asked what sources they used to find benefit or risk information.

- National Formulary - 0%
- Red Book - 0%
- Physicians Desk Reference - 0%
- Natural Standard database - 0%
- MIMS - 0%
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