To assess pharmacy student perceptions of involvement in preventative health and wellness initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

As frontline healthcare providers, pharmacists have integral roles to play in public health promotion.

Although limited, available data suggests pharmacy students are enthusiastic toward the pharmacists role in health promotion however, they may lack confidence in their abilities, particularly with regards to immunization.

Pharmacy students may have limited exposure and opportunities to engage in health promotion activities through their academic curriculum.

The Pharmacists Clinic (PC) at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences is a pharmacist-led patient care clinic. Each year, the PC engages UBC pharmacy students in annual influenza immunization clinics and a Travelling Health Fair. Services are available to all UBC employees.

OBJECTIVES

To assess pharmacy student perceptions of involvement in preventative health and wellness initiatives.

METHODS

Under licensed pharmacist supervision, volunteer pharmacy students delivered heart health, bone health, diabetes awareness events and influenza immunization clinics for UBC employees between 2014-2016.

Students attended a 1 hour, group training session by a licensed pharmacist prior to participating in 4 hours of service delivery. (Student immunizers had previously obtained injection certification).

Post-event completion, anonymous, electronic surveys were emailed to all student participants.

Surveys were developed by UBC pharmacy faculty and gathered information on student demographics, perceptions of preparedness for health promotion activities and knowledge and skill development as a result of participation.

Data analysis was by descriptive statistics.

RESULTS

- 147 surveys sent with a 40.8% completion rate.
- Majority of participants in 3rd and 4th year pharmacy.
- 100% of respondents perceived an improvement in skill and knowledge development in 1 or more areas of:
  - Information gathering
  - Documentation
  - Patient interaction and education
  - Physical assessment/data gathering

CONCLUSIONS

- Senior pharmacy students expressed positive attitudes toward involvement in health promotion activities and experienced a self-perceived increase in knowledge, skills and confidence over a brief time period.
- Students expressed a strong desire for further opportunities to engage with real patients in health promotion activities throughout their training.
- Early exposure to health promotion activities may accelerate and enhance clinical abilities of pharmacy students while preparing them for emerging pharmacist roles.

REFERENCES

3UBC Travelling Health Fair http://www.hr.ubc.ca/wellbeing-benefits/living-well/physical-wellbeing/travelling-health-fair/

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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Student Quotes

“It was a fantastic experience and helped me not only be comfortable in educating and dealing with patients, but actually become confident in talking with and performing tests and measurements on people.”

“It was interesting to have to adapt my explanation and terminology according to patient needs.”

“It has really created an interest in providing preventative care and risk assessment.”

“This kind of experience is rare in pharmacy”

“Prior to the Health Fair I felt uncomfortable and nervous about physically touching patients to take a blood sample and blood pressure, as I had little experience doing so. The volunteer training session helped greatly in alleviating these fears”

“I felt supported, but also had room to learn, and do things myself!”

Figure 1: Student survey responses regarding preparedness after completing training (left); and expectations versus. experience (right)

Key Themes

- Shift from a competent to confident learner
- Real-life patient communication is challenging
- Health promotion is rewarding and exciting
- Desire for further opportunities

Figure 2: Pre/post comparison of student self-perceptions of ability to perform patient assessment

Figure 3: Pre/post comparison of student self-perceptions of ability to provide patient education