



WEST VIRGINIA INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Pharmacists as Trusted Sources-Countering the Bias of Promotion

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Learning Objectives

- Describe how pharmacist counseling affects medication-taking behavior
- Describe how pharmacist counseling may affect information-seeking behavior about medications



Background

- Pharmaceutical industry spends billions of dollars every year on direct-to-consumer advertising (DTCA)
- Spending on DTCA has outpaced spending on advertising to physicians, pharmaceutical detailing, and physician and hospital services
- DTCA only allowed in United States & New Zealand



Physician Views

- Because patient saw DTCA, (s)he asked thoughtful questions during the visit
- DTCA made patients more involved in health care
- DTCA help patients have better discussions with their physicians and provide greater awareness of treatments



Pharmacist Views

- Reported concern about potential harm to patient health and well-being
- DTCA impedes pharmacists in counseling
- Gate-keeping role challenged by DTCA inducing drug-seeking behaviors
- Compromised role in safeguarding consumers from inappropriate use of medications



Pharmacy-Student Views

- DTCA helps patients take a more active role in health care
- DTCA may not lead to inappropriate prescribing to satisfy patient requests



Patient Views

- Awareness of DTCA increased to 81% of patients
- Most DTCA seen on TV, magazines, grocery stores
- 41% do not usually read any of the brief summary in print DTCA
- 55% of patients state that brief summary was very or somewhat hard to read



Patient Views (cont)

- 53% reported that DTCA caused them to look for more information about the medication or their health
- Most commonly used sources:
 - Health care providers
 - Books
 - Friends/relatives/neighbours



Patient Views (cont)

- 61% of respondents looked for information about side effects
- 10% looked for information about benefits



Summary

- Physicians more supportive than pharmacists of DTCA
- Majority of patients seek information from a physician rather than a pharmacist
- Relatively few patients looked for benefits of medication, compared to side effects



DTCA

- Most DTCA campaigns begin early in product cycle
 - Focus on drugs that have limited drug patient safety experience and postmarket surveillance
- Vioxx best example of how aggressive advertising can increase the likelihood of a drug being prescribed beyond labeled indication



DTCA (cont)

- Since 2004, drug companies have paid a total of \$7 billion in fines and penalties for inappropriate advertising



Pharmacist Counseling

- World Health Organization states:
“Pharmacists are uniquely qualified because...they are able to provide informed advice to patients with minor illnesses and often to those with more chronic conditions who are on established maintenance therapy.”



Pharmacist Counseling and DTCA

- Only about half of patients reported talking to pharmacist after seeing DTCA
 - Compared to 89% reported talking to physicians
- Pharmacists are experts about medications



Pharmacist Counseling

- Pharmacist counseling associated with fewer preventable adverse drug events
 - Important because medications advertised (Enbrel, etc.) have serious ADEs
- Medication adherence improves



- Improves medication knowledge
- Pharmacist counseling not associated with NSAID risk awareness
 - Written medication information not associated with NSAID risk awareness



Conclusions

- A lot of patients do not use pharmacist counseling
 - Improved outcomes
- Few patients ask questions or discuss medications with either MD or RPh
 - Medications with significant ADEs are advertised and pharmacists need to talk to patients

