Consumer Needs

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Abstract

Background:

A key focus for Australia's primary health care reform is to create a stronger primary health care system through the better coordination of care for consumers. Community pharmacy can play a pivotal role in this model as one of the most frequently accessed primary health care services. In order to inform the further development of consumer-focused policy in relation to community pharmacy services, consumer needs, expectations and experiences must be better understood.

Objective:

The objectives of the *Consumer Needs* project were to: (1) develop, implement and pilot an appropriate methodology to inform policy related decisions on a population health basis to identify consumer needs, expectations and experiences of community pharmacy services; and (2) develop and validate a tool to measure consumer health impact and outcomes sensitive to the community pharmacy context.

Methods:

The project included the following key activities:

1. Stakeholder consultation
2. Literature review
3. Community survey of 3000 participants
4. Focus groups with 106 consumers
5. Development and validation of a measurement tool.

Results:

A community survey tool was developed and validated which explored four core domains - demographic and health information, utilisation of community pharmacy services, attitudes and beliefs around medicines (including self-efficacy around medicines), and the impact of community pharmacy on consumers. In addition, measurement tool was designed and validated to provide insights into how community pharmacy impacts consumers. The validation of the tool found that: (1) the majority of scores reported high to very high internal consistency; (2) reproducibility was either moderate or substantial; and (3) the tool was sensitive to differences in population groups across age, gender, SEIFA, the number of medicines (prescription and non-prescription/complementary) and a consumer's self-rated health status (SF1).

Conclusion:

A baseline understanding of consumer experience and expectation was established through the project; this community survey tool can be used in the future to better understand consumer need and the impact of community pharmacy services. In addition, now that the measurement tool has been validated, it is fit for use and will help to better understand and measure the benefit and experience that consumers gain from community pharmacy and to inform future policy and investment in programs and services.

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ABSTRACT