Assessing the Perception and Implementation of Continuous Quality Improvement in Manitoba Community Pharmacies: A Pre-Safety IQ Initiative

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Objectives

- Safety Improvement in Quality, or Safety IQ, is a standardized continuous quality improvement (CQI) program in Manitoba designed to prevent medication incidents (MIs) from happening in community pharmacies.
- The objective of this study was to explore the current perceptions, benefits, barriers, and experience of CQI programs in Manitoba community pharmacies prior to the launch of the province-wide Safety IQ initiative.

Methods

- We administered a 28-item online questionnaire to all registered pharmacy professionals in Manitoba through support from the pharmacy regulatory authority, College of Pharmacists of Manitoba.
- Responses were collected through a 5-point Likert scale (from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) and open-ended questions.
- We performed descriptive statistics and qualitative thematic analysis, accordingly, on the collected data.

Results

- We collected 125 responses (Figure 1). Response rate was 8.05% (out of 1,523 practicing pharmacists and 30 listed technicians in Manitoba).
- Examination of the perception of CQI (Table 1) found that pharmacy professionals generally agreed that a CQI program should:
  - Enable rapid communication of MIs across pharmacies
  - Engage all staff in MI reporting and learning
  - Identify common and severe MIs
- Analysis of perceived benefits of CQI (Table 2) revealed that pharmacy professionals agreed that a CQI program would:
  - Allow for discussion of errors in a supportive environment
  - Increase understanding of factors that contribute to errors
  - Enhance awareness of MIs when dispensing
  - Improve sharing of MI trends across pharmacies
  - Allow staff to learn from mistakes in the pharmacy
- Assessment of barriers to CQI program implementation (Table 3) found that pharmacy professionals:
  - Neither agreed nor disagreed that additional staff education and training, apprehensiveness with MI reporting, or cost would be barriers to implementation.
  - More strongly agreed that increase staffing requirements and time would act as program barriers.
- Of those who implemented a CQI program, common elements include documentation of MIs, internal reporting, discussion with staff, and workflow changes.
- Pharmacy owners and managers were the most commonly listed personnel responsible for CQI program coordination, illustrating the crucial role that management plays in supporting CQI.
- Pharmacy professionals were unsure of where to look for resources on CQI, indicating an educational need. The College of Pharmacists of Manitoba and the Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada were perceived as the next most common sources for additional guidance on CQI.

Conclusions

- There is a lack of standardized, formal CQI process in place in Manitoba pharmacies. Implementation of CQI programs currently vary widely between pharmacies.
- Despite concerns such as increased resource requirements, pharmacy professionals appear to be open and supportive of a formal CQI program.
- Overall, this research provides support for the implementation of a standardized community pharmacy CQI program in Manitoba, such as Safety IQ, to advance patient and medication safety.