



Charting the 'New Normal' in Canadian Community Pharmacy Practice

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Summary

This review was initiated in 2020 to determine the 'new normal' experienced within the community pharmacy setting. This study found four themes of current practice for review: injections, medication delivery, clinical management, and controlled substances. It was found that there is unclear communication regarding regulations for staff, resulting in staff placing higher value on corporate employer's guidance.

What does this mean?

In the future, research needs to be completed on the long-term effects of the new normal that has been created from the COVID-19 pandemic. Research also needs to address the effects of pharmacies lack of awareness of the most up to date COVID-19 information from regulatory bodies and national associations.

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What is the current situation?

- Community pharmacists had their role expanded during the pandemic, which has led to a 'new-normal' and increase in the complexity of their work.
- With the exacerbated workplace stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic, research needed to be completed to determine the current practices and how they have changed over the last two years.

What questions did we aim to answer in our research?

- This review examined at changes that have occurred to community pharmacy in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic and how community pharmacists have adapted to these changes.
- Regulations were reviewed at the federal, provincial, professional, and local pharmacy levels to determine the implications of practice on the safety for both patients and professionals within these pharmacies.

How did we approach these questions?

- Three searches were conducted on December 4th, 2020 and were conducted through multiple databases.
- These results were limited to articles in 2020 and 2021, as COVID-19 was not a term defined within the databases until 2021.
- Once all citations were found, they were uploaded to a systematic review tool and then reviewed independently by two research team members.
- After the initial literature review, 5 out of the 55 screened citations were found to meet the needed criteria for this review.

What did the review find?

- In the Ontario context, pharmacists found it more beneficial to receive guidance from their corporate employers. Therefore, regulatory bodies and professional association's updates were not as beneficial as desired even though these organizations were the primary source of information.
- Throughout all of Canada, there was confusion with messaging as new permissions were given for extending and renewing prescriptions, yet regulations were set to limit patient medication supplies to 30 days maximum.