Background
Pharmacists are responsible for counseling patients on potential adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to reduce medication discrepancies and improve adherence and outcomes. In particular, pharmacists can help patients manage ADRs by recommending over-the-counter (OTC) products. OTCs are affordable treatments that not only benefit the patient but also the US healthcare system by providing $102 billion in value. A study conducted in community pharmacies in large metropolitan areas of Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, and New York found that 43% of patients received verbal counseling, including 16 cases in which the patient prompted counseling. These results suggest community pharmacists have growth opportunities in managing medication therapies which could be associated with ADRs.

Objective
The objective of this study is to identify the most common ADRs associated with commonly prescribed drugs to pinpoint how pharmacists can further provide value to the patient’s overall well-being with appropriate counseling and recommendation.

Methods
In this investigation, the top 200 prescribed drugs of 2015 were compiled using multiple public sources to be applied to the United States community pharmacy setting. Using MICROMEDEX, each of the drugs was listed with its generic name, brand name, indication, and common adverse effects. “Common adverse effects” were defined as any ADE affecting more than 50% of the patient population. In the event percentages were not assigned, all ADRs under the “common” subtitle were listed. The data collected were further evaluated to identify trends and patterns that might help understand common ADRs and potential ways to mitigate associated risks. Available OTC management options for each of the common ADRs were identified using the Mintel Solutions database.

Results
Of the top 200 prescribed drugs in 2015 investigated, 192 distinct, associated ADRs were identified. Of the 192 associated ADRs, the top 15 frequently encountered make up 50% of all the ADRs associated with the top 200 prescribed drugs and of those 15 ADRs, 10 of them are commonly treated with OTC medications. This information will help pharmacists and other health care professionals to better anticipate and manage patient needs.

Discussion
The findings highlight the importance of pharmacists’ education on associated ADRs and OTC management options available. As the landscape of healthcare continues to change, it is important to ensure all pharmacists are knowledgeable of all aspects of disease state management. Equipped with this knowledge, pharmacists can continue to add value through medication therapy management services that will improve adherence, overall health, and quality of life.

Limitations
1. The top 200 prescription drug lists vary by source. Our list was compiled to minimize this limitation while also capturing medications in the community setting where this information would be most beneficial.
2. There are also various tertiary sources that could have been utilized to identify ADRs. We minimized this limitation by maintaining consistency in our source.

Conclusions
The above findings reveal that 42% of all ADRs associated with the top 200 prescribed drugs of 2015 can be managed with OTCs.

References

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All authors have nothing to disclose.