Methods Pharmacists Prefer in Accessing Medical/Drug Related Information

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BACKGROUND

• An abundance of online and medical tools have created many avenues for pharmacists to access the most up-to-date information regarding pharmaceutical products.
• The resources used may vary between different practice settings (industry, retail, academia, hospital) making it unclear which method is preferred.
• Institutions and corporations have various services available to its employees, which are part of their basic subscription.
• Emergence of mobile technology has increased access of medical information to pharmacists in all practice settings.

OBJECTIVES

• The objective of the study is to identify which method pharmacists prefer when accessing drug/medical information.
• The research aims to identify types of traditional and online resources being used by pharmacists in different functional areas of industry, hospital, retail, and academic settings.
• Knowledge of pharmacists’ preferences can be used to design information resources to facilitate usage.

METHODS

• A web-based survey was e-mailed out to:
  - Pharmacists at various pharmaceutical companies
  - Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy – Rutgers University Faculty
  - Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Staff
  - Retail pharmacists from class of 2010
  - Medical/Drug Information Listserves
• Survey included multiple choice/rating scale questions looking at the following criteria:
  - Area of practice
  - Method of preference/access
  - Length of experience
  - Use of mobile device
  - Rating of preference/access
  - Limitation of resources
• A three week period was given to the participants to complete the survey (2/24/2011 – 2/23/2011).
• All participants were anonymous and no personal information was collected in the survey.

RESULTS

• Figure 1 shows the distribution of pharmacists in different practice settings who completed the survey. Fifty-eight percent of the participants were in an industry setting.
• Manufacturers’ website (40%) was used twice as much than 3rd party resources (17%) and primary literature (16%) to obtain non-generic product information in the pharmaceutical industry (Fig. 2).
• Third party resources were primary way of accessing medical information across hospital, retail, and academia settings (Fig. 2).
• Use of the computer/internet browser was the primary way of accessing medical information across all practice settings (Fig. 3).
• Micromedia® was preferred ~50% of the time when accessing non-generic or generic information through 3rd party resources (Table 1).
• The use of a manufacturers’ medical information call center was not preferred (0%) across all practice settings.
• E-mail alerts were preferred ~60% of the time in hospital setting compared to ~40% in other practice settings to receive updates (Fig. 4).
• Although Mobile phones (6%) were not as popular compared to a computer/internet browser (92%), they were the second most rated method of access to obtain medical information.

LIMITATIONS

• A small number of participants were included in this analysis making it difficult to compare to the general population.
• There was not an even distribution of participants across practice settings who completed a survey.
• Only 8% of the analyzed participants were retail pharmacists.

CONCLUSION

• Over 90% of pharmacists, regardless of the practice setting, preferred computer/internet browser use to obtain MI.
• Third party resources were the preferred method across all practice settings when accessing MI about a generic product; E-mail alerts were the preferred method for receiving medical information updates twice as much compared to live CE and webinar combined.
• Computer/internet and E-Mail are preferred over traditional methods to access MI amongst pharmacists today.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & DISCLOSURE

• Nima Rast, PharmD; Agapi Shah, PharmD; Gary Sills, MS
• All authors are paid employees of Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey