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A Mixed Methods Evaluation of a Government-Funded Medication Review Program in Ontario, Canada

Linda MacKeigan, Lisa Dolovich, Lori MacCallum, Nedzad Pojskic, Suzanne Cadarette

Background

In 2007 Ontario was the first Canadian province to reimburse pharmacies for doing medication reviews (MedsChecks) with patients taking 3 or more chronic medications. Later it implemented MedsCheck Diabetes. By 2012 about 2 million MedsCheck services had been provided, costing \$116 million.

Purpose

To characterize providers and recipients of MedsCheck; to identify determinants of service provision; to assess service quality, stakeholder value and impact on health care usage.

Methods

A 3-year mixed-methods study comprising 9 quantitative (administrative database analyses, audit of pharmacy records, surveys) and qualitative (interviews, case studies) substudies is underway. Main outcomes are service quality, medication adherence, health care usage, and participant satisfaction (patients, pharmacists, physicians).

Results

Service provision grew from 2007 to 2013. Early recipients were older, with greater disease burden and medication use and costs compared to 2013 recipients. Important predictors of receiving a MedsCheck were prior MedsCheck, new drug prescription, and recent hospital discharge. Multiple comorbidities or medications, inappropriate medications, rural location and a high prescription volume pharmacy were important negative predictors. Service documentation was variable and insufficient to assess quality. Key informant interviews revealed that pharmacy implementation strategies focused on supporting efficient service provision.

Conclusions

Pharmacies were challenged to incorporate this first ever, reimbursed medication management service into their core dispensing business. As a result less complex patients were recruited and quality of care was lower priority. Data collection and analyses are ongoing.