

Survey of community pharmacists: Knowledge, perceptions and practice related to chronic pain

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- OBJECTIVES:** To conduct an environmental scan of community pharmacists' knowledge, perceptions/attitudes and practice patterns related to chronic low back pain (CLP), painful diabetic neuropathy (PDN) and headache disorders (HD).
- METHODS:** This study was a cross-sectional survey of community pharmacists who were listed in Class A Register of the Ontario College of Pharmacists and had expressed an interest in participating in research. Pharmacists were emailed an invitation with a web link to participate in the survey. Participants were asked to respond to questions assessing knowledge, attitudes/perceptions, practice patterns and self-efficacy as related to CLP, PDN, HD and opioids. Demographic data was also collected.
- RESULTS:** The overall response rate was 11%. Respondents were primarily female, between the ages of 41 and 60 years, had >20 years of practice in Canada, worked 25-40 hours/week and in a metropolitan location. The majority of pharmacists report that up to 25% of their patients had CLP, PDN or HD and felt comfortable when approached by patients with these conditions. Accurate responses ranged from 43-95% for questions on knowledge of CLP, PDN and HD; only 22% of the respondents listed the correct "watchful daily dose" for opioids.
- CONCLUSIONS:** Patients with chronic pain commonly present to community pharmacies. Pharmacists have the opportunity to provide meaningful care for these patients. However, gaps in knowledge exist and can be a barrier.