

Patient perspectives on pharmacists as immunizers: A scoping review

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OBJECTIVES: Although an important Public Health strategy, the provision of flu shots by pharmacists in Canada is still in its infancy. To ensure safe, effective and appropriate steps forward, it is important to understand public opinion of this service. To that end, a scoping review was completed to provide an overview of the literature on patient perspectives, attitudes and knowledge regarding pharmacists as immunizers.

METHODS: A scoping review of published and grey literature was completed using Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework. Collected data was grouped based on common themes allowing for the identification of knowledge gaps and the development of suggestions/recommendations for future research and possible next steps regarding the understanding of patient outlooks on pharmacists as immunizers.

RESULTS: Research has predominantly used quantitative methods to examine (a) levels of knowledge/awareness regarding pharmacists as immunizers (b) experiences of those with a previous experience of pharmacist-administered immunization and (c) barriers/enablers to use of pharmacists as immunizers. This literature indicates that while awareness levels are low among the general population, satisfaction is high among those immunized by a pharmacist and patients appreciate the accessibility and convenience of pharmacy-based immunizations. Beyond the need for promoting pharmacist immunization services, barriers to be addressed include patient concerns regarding privacy and concerns about pharmacist qualifications.

CONCLUSIONS: Although there is detailed information on patient experiences post-vaccination, future research could examine the perceptions of those that have not accessed services (general population) and pursue in-depth, qualitative understandings of patients' hesitance to utilize pharmacies for immunizations.