

# Pharmacy Increase on Health Care System

Sasha James\*

Department of Medicine, North Western University, Illinois, USA

## Correspondence:

James S, Department of Medicine, North Western University, Illinois, USA, E-mail: James.sas@northwestern.edu

## DESCRIPTION

Due to Europe's current financial crisis, health-care systems have faced a number of issues. Portugal, among other countries, has taken many steps to reduce health-care expenses. As a result, total health expenditure declined by more than 6% between 2011 and 2014, reaching 15,681.9 million euros in 2014, or around 9.1% of GDP. Significant cuts in public health spending may have a direct influence on health care services, causing consumption limits and, eventually, limiting access to health care services. Community pharmacists make significant contributions to the global health care system. The pharmacist's role in the community has evolved throughout time, transitioning from medications to a patient-centred approach with greater clinical pharmacy services. Pharmacists are uniquely suited to give pharma-co-therapeutic counselling, monitor therapy outcomes, and help to reduce the risk of accidental adverse events and medication interactions. Furthermore, community pharmacists have a unique position within the health care system, having built a large network of services that provide direct outpatient care [1,2].

It is critical to encourage health activities that contribute to not just greater access to health care but also more efficient resource allocation. Several systematic literature reviews and meta-analyses have been undertaken to assess the impact of community pharmacy services in health care, demonstrating favourable effects on patient outcomes as well as economic benefits. Services in cardiovascular diseases, in particular, had a substantial influence on systolic and diastolic blood pressure, with decreases of 6.1 mmHg and 2.5 mmHg, respectively [3]. Furthermore, there is evidence that lowering diastolic blood pressure by 2 mmHg reduces the incidence of coronary heart disease, stroke, and transient ischemic episodes by 6% and 15%, respectively. Pharmaceutical services in diabetes, asthma, smoking cessation, and syringe-exchange programmes have also shown health improvements in the enrolled population. Aside from the clinical benefits, these treatments are also cost-effective, resulting in decreased direct medical expenses.

All community pharmacies in Portugal are privately held, and their primary business, like in other countries, is to supply prescription and non-prescription medications. Even though community pharmacies have exclusive access to the first, dispensing of the latter has been permitted outside of community pharmacies since 2005. Since 2007, the range of pharmaceutical services available has expanded with the addition

of immunisation services (i.e., vaccines not included in the National Vaccination Plan), disease management campaigns, health campaigns, and home care support, among other things. It should be emphasised that community pharmacies in Portugal are not reimbursed by the national healthcare system for any of these services, and patients must pay for some of them out of pocket [4]. The proposed conceptual model assessed the impact of community pharmacy services by comparing two scenarios: "with service" and "without service." The model was created to take into account both micro and macro outcomes, such as Quality-Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) and health resource consumption, to allow for an assessment of the aggregated social and economic worth of all services.

## CONCLUSION

The list of services contained in the definition required the identification of services already supplied by Portuguese community pharmacy (current services) as well as possible services that could be implemented (potential future services). A literature analysis was undertaken to identify the specific outcomes of each service tested, including disease specific, QoL, and resource consumption, in order to parameterize the model. Community pharmacies offer significant benefits in terms of both QoL and economic value. An expanded range of services, including more integration in primary and secondary care, as well as other cross-cutting services, may bring additional social and economic benefit to society.

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