

Future Proofing Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Care through Pharmacists.

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Background:

Pharmacists are at the frontline of primary health care and play an important role in the provision of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services. To keep up with emerging health needs, pharmacists' framework of practice has recently expanded to include the initiation and administration of vaccines and other injectable medicines as well as prescribing. The high accessibility of pharmacists coupled with their unique skills and an overwhelmed health system present an untapped potential in expanding in-pharmacy SRH services. This project aims to develop and facilitate tailored CPD accredited webinars to enhance pharmacist competencies in delivering in-pharmacy SRH services.

Approach:

In-depth interviews with pharmacists, researchers and sexual health experts identified key priority areas for course content development. Course design was subsequently guided by a working group of subject matter experts and piloted in 2023. Evaluation of this pilot was informed by a mixed methods approach utilising pre and post-course participant surveys and a purposely selected focus group.

Outcomes:

A case-based CPD accredited activity was developed and facilitated through two interactive live webinars. The case studies aimed to address modifiable barriers that impede the provision of effective in-pharmacy SRH services. These barriers include privacy concerns, cultural considerations, and lack of confidence in having SRH conversations with patients. This project shed light on future research trajectories in the role of pharmacists in delivering SRH services. Feedback from stakeholders indicates that addressing systemic barriers, including opportunities to improve collaborative care, are pivotal in enhancing SRH care in pharmacy settings.

Innovation and significance:

With increasing demand on the primary care workforce, opportunities to upskill allied health professionals in SRH will be increasingly important. Experiences from this pharmacist-targeted project indicate that delivering tailored SRH training that actively addresses known barriers to service delivery can increase knowledge and confidence in delivering SRH services among non-traditional providers.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

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