Abstract

Limitations on health care resources necessitate careful focus on activities that lead to the greatest improvement in patient outcomes. Despite the importance of aligning pharmacists’ time with activities deriving the most impact, there is a paucity of literature on the correlations between pharmacists’ perceptions of the impact of their activities, how they actually spend their time and how these align with published evidence of impacts on patient outcomes. Objective: To reveal hospital pharmacists’ perceptions of the impacts of their clinical activities and to characterize the correlation between the activities performed and both their perceptions of and the published evidence for their impacts on patient care. Methods: Observational qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires were conducted with each participant (N=21) to characterize their work day and determine their perceptions of the impact of their activities. A systematic literature review catalogued pharmacists’ activities with impact on patient outcomes. Primary endpoint: degree of correlation in three pair-wise comparisons between pharmacists’ perceptions of impact, time allotted to activities, and published evidence of impact. Results: Pharmacists’ time spent was positively and significantly correlated with their perception of impact (P=0.037) but not with the published evidence of impact (in either of the two analytical scenarios). The correlation between published evidence and pharmacists’ perceptions of impacts was on the threshold of statistical significance with a moderate strength of association in one of the two analytical scenarios used. Conclusions: Pharmacists dedicate more of their clinical time to activities they perceive to have greater impact. However, these perceptions and their time allocation does not correlate well with published evidence, and some misperceptions about impacts deserve correction. More rigorous research is needed to quantify the value of pharmacist services to the health care system, however designing such studies to isolate the value of specific activities will be challenging.

Keywords
Pharmacists, Professional Role, Canada.