Abstract

Polypharmacy, the state of being prescribed or taking more medications than clinically appropriate, can result in a variety of negative outcomes for both patients and healthcare facilities. These include negative outcomes such as adverse drug effects, hospitalizations, and poor patient health, as well as economic outcomes such as increased drug cost and costs associated with increased utilization of health services. Available data suggests pharmacists have the potential to have a large effect in combating this problem through a variety of interventions such as reducing the number of medications taken, reducing the number of doses taken, increasing patient adherence, preventing adverse drug reactions (ADRs), improving patient quality of life and decreasing facility and drug costs. A small number of studies have been performed on the pharmacists’ role in addressing the problem of polypharmacy; however, they include various populations, settings, and measured outcomes. Furthermore, some of the results are conflicting. Nonetheless, this review of the available literature concludes that pharmacist interventions can improve patient outcomes. With the ever-increasing costs of healthcare, the substantial cost savings for patients as well as institutions provided by these interventions are further justification for widespread implementation of pharmacist interventions at healthcare institutions.

Keywords
Pharmacists. Polypharmacy, Drug Therapy.