Abstract

The aim of the study was to quantify clinical pharmacists' workload in Australia. Specific objectives were to perform a direct observation of the pattern of clinical activities in two acute hospitals and compare that with previously documented self-reported patterns. We were also interested in identifying what records kept by pharmacists would capture all the activities they perform.

Methods: An observer recorded the activities of clinical pharmacists on six separate days in the medical and surgical wards of two Melbourne metropolitan hospitals. We examined resultant data to determine suitable records by which clinical pharmacists could capture all the activities they perform. To compare the observed pattern of clinical activities with those earlier self-reported by pharmacists, we categorised our data using the Pharmacy Activity Codes present in the penultimate version of the ICD-10-AM classification system. Results: The observer recorded the performance of 807 workload events, representing 28 separate types of activities. When compressed into the Pharmacy Activity Codes formerly used in the ICD-10-AM classification system, the pattern of activities identified by direct observation matched that which had previously been self-reported by pharmacists. The majority of the activities performed could be captured by completion of a Pharmaceutical Care Plan and by recording pharmacists interventions to a database. The remaining activities may be recorded for departmental workload purposes in a simple template format. Conclusion: The pattern of clinical pharmacist activity at the two hospitals was confirmed by direct observation as similar to that previously reported in other Australian hospitals. A Pharmaceutical Care Plan, a database for intervention recording and a simple workload template provide the means to record all activities that clinical pharmacists perform.

Keywords