

A Mental Wellness Program for Independent Community Pharmacy Employees and Its Impact on Well-being, Pharmacy Proficiency, and Patient Care

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Background: Many healthcare professionals have gone above and beyond their typical roles to help save their communities from COVID-19 and are unfortunately experiencing burnout and a decrease in wellbeing. This has become a concern for many patients, healthcare workers, employers, and healthcare organizations. Several pharmacy organizations have highlighted the importance of and provided tools to help improve the wellbeing of pharmacy staff. However, no data has shown the impact these resources may have in terms of pharmacy staff wellbeing, pharmacy proficiency, and overall patient care.

Objective: To measure the impact of an employee mental wellness program on well-being, overall work performance and patient care in the independent community pharmacy setting.

Methods: This prospective study took place at a rural, North Carolina independent, community pharmacy. Eligible participants included pharmacy staff employed part-time or full-time but excluded temporary employees and those under the age of 18 years. Each participant completed a Pre-Program Survey through the secure, online platform, Qualtrics. The survey gained a baseline understanding of the employees' opinions on mental wellness, current mood and burnout status, stress factors, employee relationships, purpose behind their work, and impact of stress on their work performance. The survey included the WHO-5 Well-being Index and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. The participants then completed 6 brief classes, each focusing on 1-2 domains of mental well-being while building resources and skills that could be used in his or her personal and professional life. After completing the classes, the employee completed a Post-Program Survey through Qualtrics. This survey assessed the same parameters from the Pre-Program Survey with an additional section for specific program feedback. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze study results.

Preliminary Results: A total of 22 employees responded to the Pre-Program survey and 15 employees responded to the Post Program Survey. The WHO-5 Well-being Index average scores showed improved wellness from the Pre-Program to Post Program Survey (61.26% vs 68.15%). The scores for the Maslach Burnout Inventory also showed improvement in mean scores respectively including decreased emotional exhaustion (2.63 vs 1.89), decrease in depersonalization (1.32 vs 0.55), and increase in personal accomplishment (5.02 vs 5.18). Specific survey statements also showed improvement in these areas.

Conclusion: Providing a mental wellness program for employees of an independent pharmacy helped to improve personal wellbeing, reduce emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and improve the perception of personal accomplishments at work. Pharmacy proficiency may improve along with patient safety and quality of care; however, due to several external factors, these could not be properly assessed through this project. More wellness program implementation should be considered by organizations, especially pharmacies, in order to prevent burnout and improve employee wellbeing.