
Expanding the Role of **Community Pharmacists** in Primary Healthcare Services

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HEALTHCARE DELIVERY



**Lowering Healthcare
Costs**



**Improve Patient
satisfaction**



Lower risk

IMPROVING THE PATIENT HEALTH OUTCOMES



**COMMUNITY PHARMACIST
BEYOND DISPENSING ROLE**

PHARMACY PRACTICE

EVOLVING NEEDS

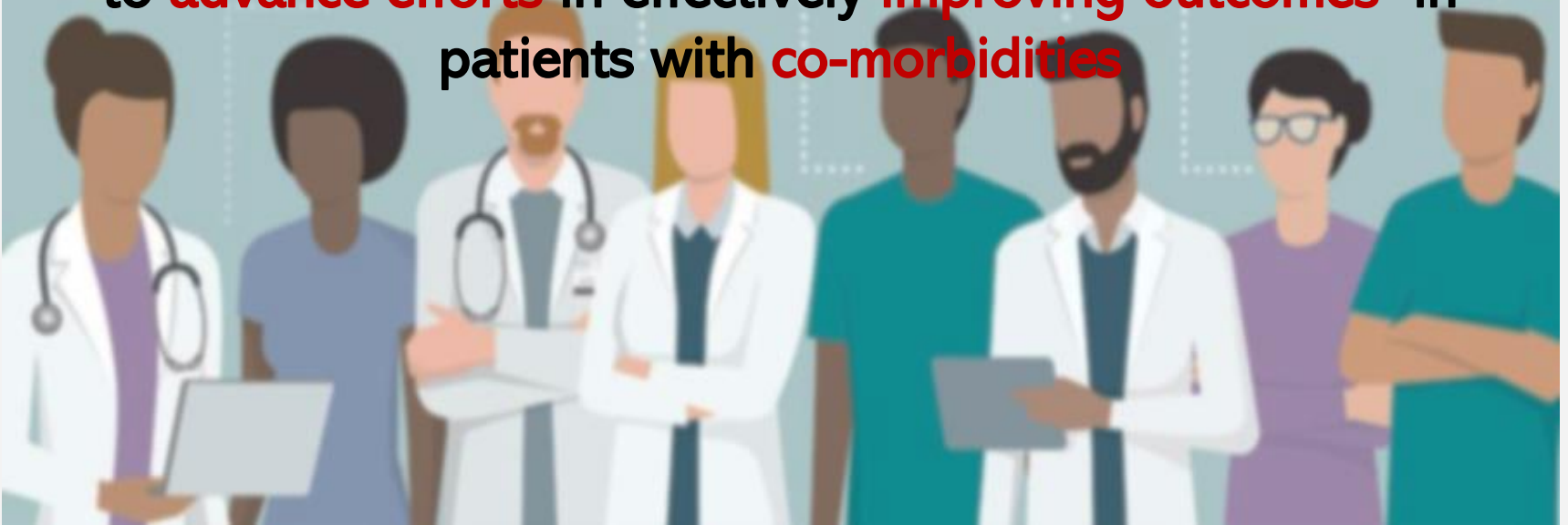
- ✓ Increased prevalence of drug-related morbidity and mortality
- ✓ Increase of costs of healthcare delivery
- ✓ Demographic changes in the population
- ✓ Technological advancements
- ✓ Increased patients' demands, preferences and expectations.
- ✓ The public accessibility to pharmacy services



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SERVICES

- ✓ Patient education and counselling
- ✓ Health promotion and disease prevention
- ✓ Contributing to primary healthcare
- ✓ Medication (Therapy) management
- ✓ Collaboration with other health care professionals

Community pharmacists are well positioned to **join** interdisciplinary care teams to **advance efforts** in effectively **improving outcomes** in patients with **co-morbidities**



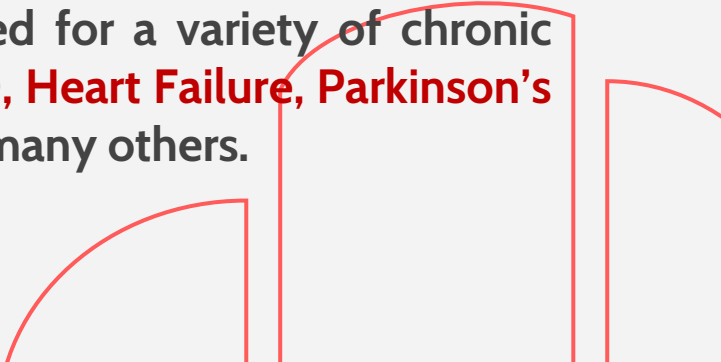
PATIENT EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING

The human and economic consequences of inappropriate medication use have been the subject of professional, public, and congressional discourse for more than two decades.

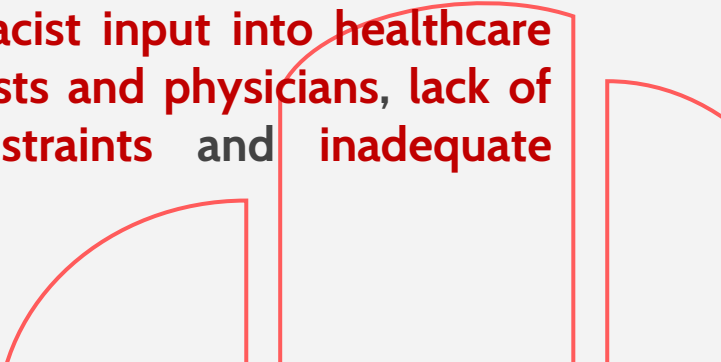
Lack of sufficient knowledge about their health problems and medications is a cause of patients' nonadherence to their pharmacotherapeutic regimens and monitoring plans

The pharmacy profession has accepted responsibility for providing patient education and counseling in the context of primary care to improve patient adherence and reduce medication-related problems.

MEDICATION THERAPY MANAGEMENT

- Disease management principles involve **coordinated healthcare interventions** for diseases in which patients must assume some responsibility for their care.
 - Pharmacists providing medication therapy management services address **drug** and **non-drug therapy**, as well as **lifestyle modifications** associated with these diseases
 - Diverse disease management programs that incorporate effective medication management have been developed for a variety of chronic disease state such as **Diabetes, Asthma, COPD, Heart Failure, Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's Disease, Depression** and many others.
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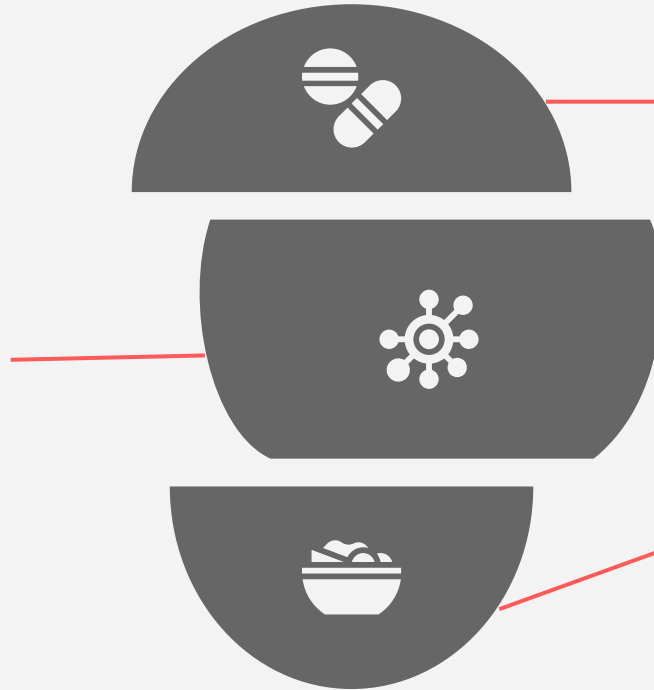
MEDICATION THERAPY MANAGEMENT

- Pharmacists also integrate the patient into programs that empower them to manage their disease and medications, and thereby reduce healthcare costs and improve quality of life of patients.
 - Attempts by the private community pharmacies in many developing countries to provide some professional services were not successful due to lack of funding.
 - Factors found to impede the growth of community pharmacists are **insufficient integration of community pharmacist input into healthcare pathways, poor relationship among pharmacists and physicians, lack of access to patient information, time constraints and inadequate compensation.**
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HEALTH PROMOTION

Community pharmacies are an easily accessible and cost-effective platform for delivering health care worldwide

The range of services provided has undergone rapid expansion in recent years.



Pharmacy user health-related behavior e.g., smoking, exercise, inhaler technique

Community pharmacies give advice on a range of health-promoting behaviors that aim to improve health and to optimize the management of long-term conditions.

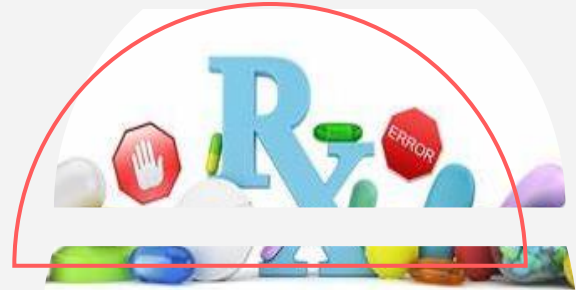
RISK PREVENTION

Medication errors are highly pervasive across all settings of care

Ensuring the safe prescribing and dispensing of medication to patients is a core function of a pharmacist

Pharmacists ensure that patients not only get the correct medication and dosing, but that they have the guidance they need to use the medication safely and effectively.

There are some clear opportunities for hospital and community pharmacists to assume a greater role in pressing patient safety issues, such as, **access to medications, medication adherence, readmission reductions, and medication safety.**



Paradigm shift in community pharmacy practice

From
dispensing
and indirect
clinical focus

Test treat and envisaged immunization role

- Pharmacists, in partnership with other healthcare providers, could order, collect specimens, conduct and interpret tests and, when appropriate, initiate treatment for infectious diseases including COVID-19.
- Envisaged role in immunization concerning COVID-19

To direct
clinical and
patient
centered focus

Perspective shift in community pharmacy practice

From mere a
dispenser

- **Telepharmacy:** A method in which a pharmacist utilizes telecommunications technology to oversee aspects of pharmacy operations or provide patient-care services
- **Home Medicines Service:** Home delivery of medication to support and protect the vulnerable members of community from potential exposure to COVID-19

To trustworthy
healthcare
professional

Responsibility shift in community pharmacy practice

From meager
accountability
for patient's
medication

- **Compounding authorization:** Pharmacy compounders not registered as outsourcing facilities are authorized to compound certain drugs for hospitalized patients during public health emergency to address the shortage of certain crucial drugs (i.e., sedatives, anesthetics, painkillers, and muscle relaxants etc) used in the treatment of COVID-19
- **Continued dispensing:** Pharmacists are authorized to supply standard quantity (usually 1 month's supply) of essential prescription only medicines without a prescription in an emergency to improve patient adherence to medicine therapy in defined exceptional circumstances
- **Therapeutic substitution:** Pharmacists are authorized to supply alternative strengths, quantities or dosage forms of a medicine without prior approval from the prescriber to ensure continuity of therapy during a verified national shortage of the prescribed medicine
- **Repackaging:** Pharmacists are authorized to repack non-prescription medication to minimize the disruption of the drug supply and assist your patients
- **Temporary exemptions for controlled Substances:** Pharmacists are authorized to extend prescriptions, transfer prescriptions to other pharmacists, issue verbal orders (i.e., over the phone), and permit pharmacy employees to deliver prescriptions of controlled substances to patients' homes

To full
accountability
for patient's
medication

BARRIERS

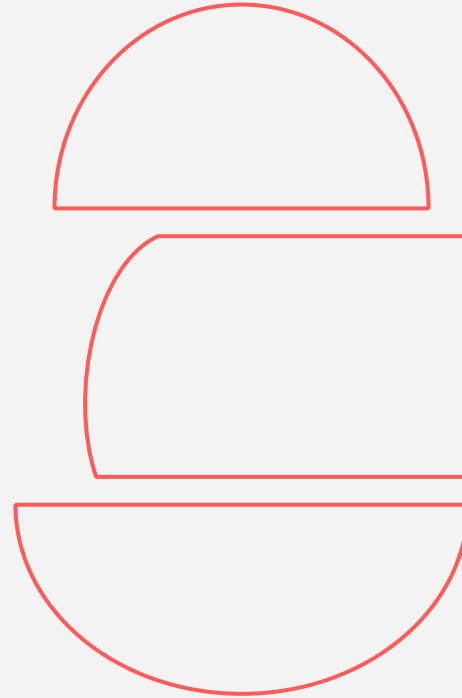
Pharmacists are not recognized as eligible primary care providers and, as a result, may be underutilized in this role.

Lack of pharmacist's personnel as part of the governmental interdisciplinary primary healthcare team, which can cause breakdown in communication and lead to confusion and misinformation, causing errors and overprescribing.



PRIMARY HEALTHCARE SETTINGS

- The total number of primary health care centers is **765** centers in Palestine, of which **606** centers in the West Bank and **159** centers in Gaza Strip.
- The number of population per center was 6,435 persons.
- MoH provides a variety of specialized medical services through **219 PHC clinics**.
- During 2021, specialized services were provided through clinics of dermatology, pediatrics, diabetic, psychiatry, pulmonology, gynecology, orthopedic, ENT, communicable and non-communicable diseases, and endocrinology.



MOH HUMAN RESOURCES

Table (27) Distribution of Medical Human Resources by Specialty & Region, Palestine 2021*

Specialty & Region	Physician	Dentist	Pharmacist	Nurse	Midwife
West Bank	8,106	4,126	5,510	10,557	937
Gaza Strip	3,207	228**	3,487	4,036	591
Palestine	11,313	4,354	8,997	14,593	1,528

*Source: syndicates

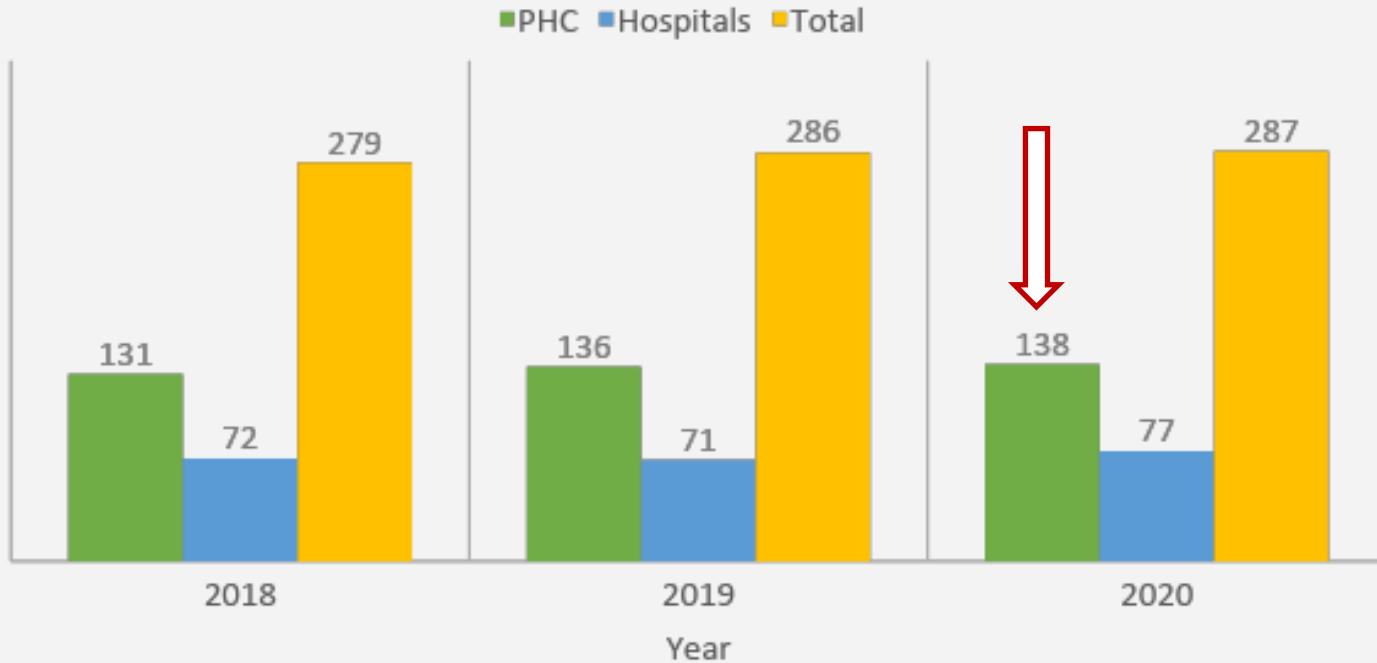
**Health Annual Report 2021, Gaza

Table (28) Distribution of Medical Human Resources by Specialty & Region, MoH, Palestine 2021

Speciality Region	General Physician	Specialized Physician	Dentist	Pharmacist	Nurse	Midwife	Paramedical	Administrati on & Services	Grand Total
West Bank	802	477	80	287	2,652	380	1,507	2,029	8,214
Gaza Strip	1,490	514	97	312	3,071	334	1433	3,877	11,128
Palestine	2,292	991	177	599	5,723	714	2,940	5,906	19,342

MOH PHARMACISTS IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Pharmacists workforce in MOH



PHARMACISTS' ROLE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC - WORLDWIDE



Increasing the accessibility of medications



Increasing the use of telehealth to provide continuous care in all primary healthcare settings



Taking a lead on COVID-19 testing and vaccination efforts.

ROLE OF PHARMACIST IN COVID 19 - PALESTINE

01

**ENSURE THE
AVAILABILITY OF
EFFECTIVE THERAPY**

02

**HEALTH EDUCATION
AND HEALTH
PROMOTION ACTIVITIES**

03

**COUNSELING
REGARDING THE SAFETY
PRECAUTIONS TO
MINIMIZE EXPOSURE**

04

**SUPPORT GENERAL
HEALTH CARE TEAMS
IN INFECTION
PREVENTION**

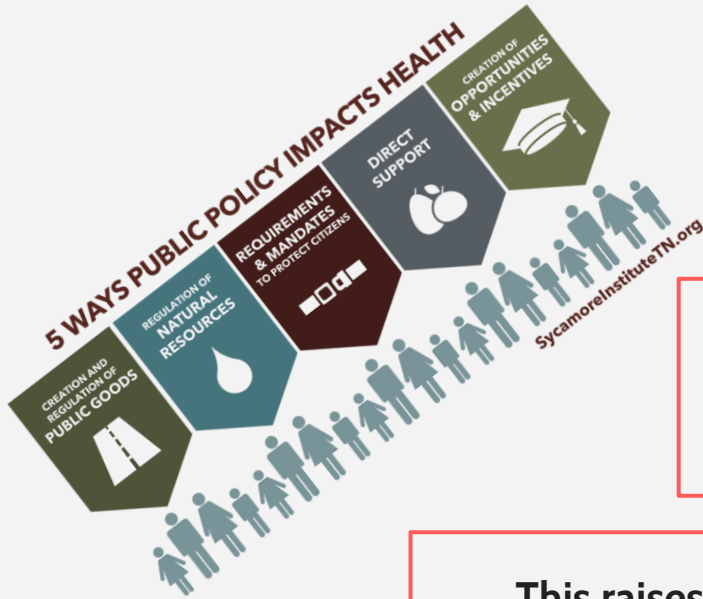
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**PHARMACISTS' ROLE IN
MANAGING MINOR
AILMENTS INCREASES**

06

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
MENTAL HEALTH
SUPPORT**

RECOMMENDATIONS



Recognition of pharmacists as providers to facilitate full participation in primary healthcare settings (governmental and private)

Enhanced collaborative relationships between pharmacists and other providers to improve interdisciplinary care.

This raises an important question: should the pharmacy profession only undertake tasks for which there is strong policy relevance with evidence of economic and public health benefits?