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DEPARTMENT
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Analysis of a behaviour change intervention to enhance information exchange in over-the-counter consultations

Master's Thesis

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Abstract

Background: Self-medication is a common way to treat minor illnesses among consumers. Although over-the-counter (OTC) availability might indicate to consumers that these medicines are safe and harmless, a failure to follow the label instructions and warnings can still lead to adverse effects and drug interactions. As university-qualified health professionals pharmacists are in the position to support consumers with their expert knowledge and reduce the potential risks of OTC medicines. Communication on appropriate standards between consumers and pharmacists is essential to achieve the best health outcome for consumers. Research showed that there is significant room to enhance information exchange. Previous interventions targeting the pharmacist's consultation behaviours did not significantly enhance information exchange. Therefore, the barriers identified to information exchange need to be addressed from the consumer perspective.

Objective: The key objective of this thesis was to determine the impact of using posters as situational cues (SitCues) on barriers identified to information exchange. Therefore, the SitCue targeted the barriers from the consumer perspective.

Methodology: As part of a behaviour change intervention two different posters were used as situational cues in the community pharmacy setting. The posters provided information about the pharmacist's role and qualification and about the importance to exchange information with the pharmacist. To investigate consumers' perspective a consumer survey was conducted in two different pharmacies in Perth.

Results: Significant changes were found for consumers' perception about the pharmacist's role and responsibility, consumers' ability to differentiate between pharmacy staff and consumers' perception about the pharmacist's duty to keep information confidential.

Conclusion: This study has shown that using posters as SitCues in a behaviour change intervention is feasible in the community pharmacy setting. In the future, this practice could be adopted to provide several different types of information to consumers in the community pharmacy setting.

Further, this study proved the intervention functions "education" and "modelling" as feasible and appropriate to address barriers identified to information exchange. As a result consumers may change their information giving behaviour. Even though significant results have been found, further investigation with a bigger study sample is needed to better elucidate and underpin the findings of this feasibility study.