

A B S T R A C T
The Optimized Emergency Pharmacist Role
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INTRODUCTION: The University of Rochester Medical Center Emergency Department has undertaken a project to optimize and evaluate the patient safety effects of an established Emergency Department Pharmacist (EDP) Program. During the two-month start-up period, the role of the EDP was optimized using qualitative research methods to obtain feedback from providers, nurses, patients, and pharmacists. The goal of this study is to report the preliminary findings of the optimization data and to provide specific recommendations for the optimized EDP roles.

SETTING: A tertiary care academic medical center ED which cares for 95,000 patients per year.

METHODS: Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a purposive sampling technique until redundancy was reached. Targeted groups included: Emergency Medicine (EM) resident and attending physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, patients, and pharmacists. Field notes were transcribed, compiled, coded and thematically analyzed, and recommendations were developed.

RESULTS: Forty-three interviews were conducted, with several themes identified. We found that the the EDP should:

1. maintain high visibility so that staff are reminded of presence and thus more likely to use as resource
2. focus on ED patients, avoiding the care of inpatients boarding in the ED, who should receive inpatient pharmacy services
3. focus coverage on peak volume periods including weekends
4. maintain surveillance of provider orders to increase likelihood of intercepting problem drug orders
5. Respond to all trauma and medical resuscitations
6. Carry no dispensing responsibility
7. Minimize administrative responsibility
8. establish a system to require EDP review of select pediatric orders such as patients <1 year or <10kg
9. Carry a portable phone to be immediately accessible

CONCLUSION: These recommendations are based on staff perceptions at this academic medical center. Ongoing research will serve to validate the patient safety effect of the optimized EDP role.

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