

# Hospital pharmacists seen through the eyes of the physicians: qualitative semi-structured interviews

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## Abstract

**Background:** Pharmacist-physician collaboration can lead to many positive outcomes. However, collaboration between healthcare providers is complex and rarely performed optimally.

**Objectives:** To study physician-pharmacist collaboration in hospital settings, from the physician's point of view.

**Setting:** Eight regional non-teaching hospital facilities, within a local area of northwest Switzerland, supplied by an independent central pharmacy.

**Method:** Physicians were sampled using a maximal variation purposive method. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted and their content was recorded. Mind maps were made with the collected data. An inductive approach was used for the analysis.

**Main outcome measure:** Physicians' main perceptions of hospital pharmacists.

**Results:** Twelve physicians and one medical student were interviewed (average interview length 37 minutes). Key opinions (n≥7) include the following: Physicians lack knowledge about hospital pharmacists' roles, competences and activities. Physicians report a lack of presence and involvement of hospital pharmacists. Although physicians value hospital pharmacists' complementary competences, they also point out a knowledge gap between them and that hospital pharmacists lack clinical competences. Some pharmaceutical activities (e.g. drug formulary management or participation in ward rounds) lead to significant drawbacks for physicians. Other pharmaceutical activities (e.g. teaching and supervision) are valued and sought for by physicians. Physicians report they take drug treatment decisions as they bear the legal responsibility.

**Conclusion:** The presence, visibility and implication of hospital pharmacists need to be improved, and physicians should be more aware of what they can offer them. Physicians' expectations and needs should be taken further into consideration and new models of interaction should be developed.

Published in : International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy, doi: 10.1007/s11096-016-0395-1  
38(6), 1483-1496

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