

## A REVIEW ON PHARMACIST SERVICES IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE AND OUTCOMES

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### Abstract

Pharmacists play a crucial role in providing mental health care services, highlighting the importance of their role in improving patient outcomes. This review aims to shed light on the various pharmacist services available in mental health care and the impact of these services on patient outcomes. This study reviews the existing literature on pharmacist services in mental health care and their outcomes. The analysis was conducted using secondary data sources such as published articles, reports, and studies. The review found that pharmacist-provided services play a crucial role in improving patient outcomes, medication adherence, and overall quality of care for individuals with mental health conditions. These services include medication therapy management, patient counseling, and education on mental health conditions and treatments. The study highlights the importance of incorporating pharmacists into mental health care groups to enhance collaboration, optimize medication management, and ultimately improve patient outcomes in this population. Overall, this review highlights the valuable contributions of pharmacists in mental health care and underscores the importance of integrating their services into comprehensive treatment plans for optimal patient outcomes.

**Keywords:** Mental health, Patient outcomes, Pharmacist services, Medication adherence, Treatment plans

### 1. Introduction

Mental health disorders affect millions of people worldwide, contributing to a significant burden on individuals, families, and healthcare systems (Richardson, 2014). The complex nature of mental health conditions requires a comprehensive approach to treatment, including pharmacotherapy as a vital component. Pharmacists play a crucial role in mental health care delivery, as they possess specialized knowledge in psychotropic medication management, medication therapy management, and patient counseling (Werremeyer, 2020).

In order to maximize patient outcomes, pharmacists work in tandem with prescribers, nurses, social workers, and other healthcare professionals as essential members of the healthcare team. Pharmacists offer a wide range of services in mental health care settings, such as medication review, monitoring for adverse drug reactions, managing drug-drug interactions, adherence

assessment, patient education, and counseling on the safe and efficient use of psychotropic medications (Richardson, 2014).

Over time, the role of pharmacists in mental health treatment has changed to reflect the increased appreciation for their knowledge and contributions to patient care. Numerous research works have proven the beneficial effects of pharmacist services on mental health outcomes, including treatment success overall, medication adherence, quality of life, and symptom management (Javedh, 2020; Goldstone, 2015). The implementation of pharmacists' treatments has demonstrated a reduction in hospital readmissions, ER visits, and medical expenses, underscoring their significance in augmenting the efficaciousness and efficiency of mental health care provision.

Pharmacologists' participation in mental health care is guided by evidence-based practice guides. These guidelines recommend pharmacists' active participation in medication management, treatment planning, and patient assessment to optimize therapy outcomes and minimize the risks associated with psychotropic medications (Davis, 2020).

Furthermore, pharmacists provide valuable support to patients with mental health conditions, helping them navigate the complexities of their treatment regimens, addressing their concerns, and promoting medication adherence. Pharmacists' expertise in psychotropic medications enables them to identify potential drug-related problems, such as therapeutic duplications, side effects, and drug-drug interactions, and collaborate with prescribers to resolve these issues proactively (Ahmed, 2021).

Despite the recognized benefits of pharmacist services in mental health care, challenges exist in incorporating pharmacists into interdisciplinary care groups and expanding their scope of practice in mental health settings. Limited awareness of pharmacists' roles, inadequate reimbursement for their services, and regulatory barriers hinder their ability to deliver comprehensive care and fully utilize their expertise in mental health care (Finley, 2015).

In mental health care, pharmacists are vital because they offer services that encourage the responsible and efficient use of psychotropic drugs. Including pharmacists as vital associates of multidisciplinary mental health care teams can help address the complex requirements of patients with mental health issues and enhance the quality of treatment provided overall as healthcare systems continue to change (Herbert, 2017). To assess the influence of pharmacist services on mental health outcomes, investigate novel models of pharmacist-led care, and promote the acknowledgement and incorporation of pharmacists' competence in mental health settings, further study is required.

Examining the available information on pharmacist services in mental health treatment and their effects on patient outcomes is the goal of this review. The review will look at the services that

pharmacists offer, their role in mental health treatment, and the results of their interventions with this population. This review aims to emphasize the significant role that pharmacists play in enhancing the quality of care for people with mental health disorders by synthesizing the body of research on pharmacist services in mental health upkeep.

## 2. Literature Review

The function of pharmacists in mental health care and their influence on patient outcomes have been the subject of numerous research. Pharmacist-led medication evaluations and interventions have been shown to improve patient outcomes in mental health care settings (Khartabil, 2022). The study emphasized the significance of pharmacists in diagnosing drug-related issues, enhancing medication compliance, and educating patients about prescription drugs for mental health. Rubio-Valera (2014) discovered in his systematic analysis that significant gains in treatment adherence, patient satisfaction, and clinical results can result from pharmacists working in the mental health field.

Werremeyer (2020) conducted another study that showed how pharmacist-led treatments can improve medication management, lower medication mistakes, and improve clinical outcomes for patients with mental health conditions. The study underlined that in order to maximize drug therapy and enhance patient outcomes in mental health care, collaborative care models incorporating pharmacists are essential.

Silvia (2020) conducted a meta-analysis and discovered that pharmaceutical therapy management services provided by pharmacists in mental health settings were linked to notable increases in medication adherence and decreases in hospitalizations among patients suffering from psychiatric disorders. Similar to this, a comprehensive analysis conducted in 2014 by Richardson found that pharmacist interventions in mental health care increased patients' quality of life, adherence to medication, and control over symptoms.

A study by Khartabil (2022) found that pharmacist-led medication therapy management services significantly improved medication adherence and reduced hospitalizations among patients with depression. Another study by Harms (2017) demonstrated that pharmacist-provided cognitive behavioral therapy significantly reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression in patients with comorbid mental health.

Pharmacists also play a crucial role in patient education and counseling in mental health care. A study by Goldstone (2015) found that pharmacist-led patient education programs in mental health settings improved patient knowledge of their condition and medication, leading to better treatment outcomes and increased medication adherence.

Lastly, a systematic review by Farag (2022) highlighted the positive influence of pharmacist-led interventions on mental health results across various populations, including patients with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and anxiety disorders. These findings suggest that pharmacist services can be a valuable addition to multidisciplinary mental health care teams and can be crucial in enhancing outcomes for individuals with mental health situations.

In summary, the literature backs the crucial role of pharmacologists in mental health care, highlighting their contribution to enhancing patient outcomes through medication management, adherence support, and patient education. Collaborative care models involving pharmacists are evident to be effective in improving treatment care for individuals with mental health disorders. More research is needed to explore the specific interventions and practices that can optimize pharmacist services in mental health care settings and enhance patient outcomes.

### **3. Methodology**

This study used a systematic review methodology to explore the scope and outcomes of pharmacist services in mental health care. The literature search was conducted using electronic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and PsycINFO. The search strategy included keywords related to pharmacist services, mental health care, and outcomes. Relevant articles published for the past ten years were incorporated in this review.

Inclusion criteria for the selection of articles involved research that focused on pharmacist-led interventions in mental health care settings, including hospitals and mental health clinics. Studies that reported outcomes related to medication adherence, patient satisfaction, quality of life and cost-effectiveness were included in this review.

The data extraction process involved reviewing the articles to identify key information such as study design, sample size, pharmacist interventions, outcomes measured, and results. Data synthesis was conducted to identify common themes and patterns in the findings of the incorporated studies.

The Joanna Briggs Institute Critical Appraisal instruments were used to evaluate the caliber of the research that was included. The interpretation of the findings and conclusions derived from this evaluation took the overall caliber of the research into account.

Limitations of this review include the potential for publication bias, as only published studies were included, and the exclusion of non-English language articles. Regardless of these restrictions, this review offers valued insights into the role of pharmacist services in mental health care and their impact on patient outcomes.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

## **4.1 Pharmacist Services in Mental Health Care**

### *4.1.1 Overview of pharmacist roles in mental health care*

By offering a variety of services to individuals with mental health situations, pharmacists take a great part in the provision of mental health care. Beyond simply distributing medication, pharmacists now provide direct patient care, medication management, patient education, and coordination with other healthcare professionals in the field of mental health care. These days, pharmacists are seen as essential members of the medical team when it comes to treating mental health issues (Bell, 2013).

Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to support patients with mental health conditions due to their expertise in pharmacotherapy and medication management. They work closely with patients to optimize medication regimens, ensure adherence to treatment plans, monitor for drug interactions and side effects, and provide counseling on medication use. Pharmacists also play a critical role in promoting the safe and effective use of psychotropic medications, which are commonly prescribed for mental health conditions (Finley, 2015).

### *4.1.2 Types of services provided by pharmacists*

Pharmacists provide numerous services in mental health care, including medication therapy management, medication reconciliation, medication education, and collaborative care. One key service provided by pharmacists is medication therapy management, which involves reviewing patients' medication regimens, assessing medication appropriateness and effectiveness, identifying and resolving medication-related problems, and collaborating with prescribers and other healthcare providers to optimize medication therapy (Goldstone, 2015).

In order to reduce medication errors, pharmacists are also essential in medication reconciliation, which entails making sure that patients' medication lists are correct and up to date (Harms, 2017). Pharmacists work with patients to identify any discrepancies in their medication lists, reconcile these discrepancies with the patient's healthcare team, and provide guidance on medication management.

In addition, pharmacists provide medication education to patients with mental health conditions to ensure they understand their medications, including proper administration, potential side effects, and the importance of adherence to treatment plans (Khartabil, 2014). Pharmacists also offer counseling and support to patients on managing their mental health conditions, promoting healthy behaviors, and accessing additional resources and support services.

Furthermore, pharmacists engage in collaborative care models with other healthcare providers, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, and primary care physicians, to coordinate patient care and ensure comprehensive organization of mental health situations. This multidisciplinary approach to

mental health care allows pharmacists to contribute their expertise in medication management and monitoring, leading to improved patient outcomes (Richardson, 2014).

#### *4.1.3 Impact of pharmacist services on patient outcomes*

Research has shown that pharmacist services in mental health care have a positive impact on patient results, treatment outcomes, quality of life, and healthcare utilization. Studies have demonstrated that pharmacist-led interventions, such as collaborative care, can improve medication adherence degrees among individuals with mental health conditions (Rubio-Valera, 2014). By working closely with patients to address medication-related concerns, provide education, and monitor for side effects, pharmacists help patients better adhere to their treatment plans, leading to improved clinical outcomes.

Pharmacist services have also been shown to enhance treatment outcomes for patients with mental health conditions. By optimizing medication regimens, addressing medication-related problems, and collaborating with other healthcare providers, pharmacists help patients achieve better control of their symptoms, leading to improved quality of life and overall well-being. Pharmacists' expertise in pharmacotherapy and medication management enables them to tailor treatment plans to meet the individual needs of patients with mental health conditions, resulting in more effective and personalized care (Werremeyer, 2020).

Additionally, pharmacist services in mental health care have been associated with reduced healthcare utilization and costs. By providing medication therapy management, medication reconciliation, and collaborative care, pharmacists help prevent medication errors, reduce hospitalizations, and improve medication adherence, ultimately leading to lower healthcare costs for patients with mental health situations (Silvia, 2020). Services provided by pharmacists help manage mental health disorders effectively and efficiently, improving patient outcomes and lowering healthcare costs.

#### **4.2 Impact of Pharmacist Services on Mental Health Outcomes**

*Adherence to medication:* The study found a significant improvement in medication adherence among individuals who received pharmacist services for mental health conditions. Pharmacists played a crucial role in educating patients about their medications, including dosing, potential side effects, and the importance of adherence. By actively engaging with patients and addressing their concerns, pharmacists helped to reduce barriers to adherence, such as forgetfulness or misconceptions about medications. For example, a study by Richardson (2014) demonstrated that medication adherence significantly improved in a group of patients who received pharmacist-led medication counseling in comparison to a control group that did not receive this treatment.

*Treatment outcomes:* The provision of pharmacist services also led to better treatment outcomes for patients with mental health conditions. Pharmacists collaborate closely with other healthcare

providers to enhance medication routines and monitor patients' progress over time. By conducting medication reviews and dose adjustments when necessary, pharmacists helped to ensure that patients were receiving the most effective treatments for their conditions. For instance, a study by Khartabil (2022) showed that patients who received pharmacist-led interventions experienced greater improvements in symptom severity and functioning compared to those who did not.

*Patient satisfaction:* Patients who received pharmacist services for their mental health conditions reported high levels of satisfaction with the care they received. Pharmacists were viewed as trusted and approachable healthcare providers who took the time to listen to patients' concerns and provide personalized support. They played an important role in fostering strong patient-pharmacist relationships, which contributed to improved treatment adherence and outcomes. For example, a study by Harms (2017) found that patients who received pharmacist-led counseling reported higher levels of satisfaction with their medication therapy and overall care compared to those who did not.

*Cost-effectiveness:* The provision of pharmacist services for mental health conditions was also found to be cost-effective. By actively managing medications and collaborating with other healthcare providers, pharmacists helped to reduce unnecessary healthcare utilization, such as emergency room visits or hospitalizations. This ultimately led to cost savings for both patients and healthcare systems. A study by Goldstone (2015) demonstrated that integrating pharmacist services into mental healthcare teams resulted in lower overall healthcare costs and improved resource utilization.

The study's overall conclusions demonstrate the considerable improvement in mental health outcomes that results from pharmacist services can bring about. For individuals with mental health ailments, pharmacists are essential in enhancing medication adherence, treatment results, patient happiness, and cost-effectiveness. Pharmacists can increase the general health of people with mental health disorders by offering comprehensive care and support. These results go hand in hand with other studies that have highlighted the useful role pharmacists play in mental health treatment and underline how crucial it is to incorporate pharmacist services into multidisciplinary care teams in order to improve patient outcomes.

### ***4.3 Challenges Faced by Pharmacists in Mental Health Care***

#### ***4.3.1 Stigma:***

One of the major challenges faced by pharmacists in mental health care is the stigma associated with mental illness. Stigma can manifest in various ways, such as discrimination, prejudice, and negative attitudes towards individuals with mental health conditions. This stigma can lead to reluctance among patients to seek help for mental health issues, including medication support from pharmacists (Finley, 2015). Pharmacists may also face stigma within the healthcare system, where mental health may not be given the same priority or resources as physical health conditions.

Previous research has shown that stigma can significantly influence the treatment and management of mental health disorders. For example, a study by Bell (2022) found that stigma is a barrier to treatment adherence and engagement in individuals with mental illness. Pharmacists play a crucial role in supporting patients with mental health conditions, but they may face challenges in building trust and rapport with patients who are hesitant to seek help due to stigma.

#### *4.3.2 Limited resources and funding:*

Another significant challenge faced by pharmacists in mental health care is limited resources and funding. Mental health services are often underfunded and understaffed, resulting in a lack of admittance to essential resources for patients with mental health conditions (Ahmed, 2021). Pharmacists may struggle to provide comprehensive care and support to patients, including medication management and adherence monitoring, due to limited resources for mental health services.

Prior studies have highlighted the effect of limited resources on mental health care. For example, a study by Davis (2020) found that disparities in mental health services are often due to limited funding and resources, leading to inadequate support for individuals with mental health conditions. Pharmacists may face challenges in providing timely and effective care to patients with mental health ailments due to limited resources, which can impact medication adherence and overall treatment outcomes.

#### *4.3.3 Medication adherence issues:*

Medication adherence is a critical aspect of managing mental health conditions, but it is also a significant challenge for pharmacists. Patients with mental health disorders may struggle with medication adherence for various reasons, including stigma, side effects, and complex medication regimens (Farag, 2022). Pharmacists play a vital role in supporting patients with medication management, but they may encounter difficulties in addressing adherence issues in individuals with mental health conditions.

Prior studies have demonstrated that people with mental health issues frequently do not take their medications as prescribed. For instance, Herbert's (2017) research revealed that up to 50% of schizophrenia patients had inadequate drug adherence, which results in less than ideal treatment outcomes. Due to the stigma devoted to mental illness and the complexity of mental health diseases, pharmacists may encounter difficulties while addressing drug adherence issues. To assist patients in overcoming adherence challenges, pharmacists may need to employ patient-centered strategies, including drug treatment management and motivational interviewing.

### ***4.4 Strategies to Enhance Pharmacist Services in Mental Health Care***

#### *4.1.1 Interprofessional collaboration:*



Interprofessional collaboration plays a crucial role in enhancing pharmacist services in mental health care. Collaboration between pharmacists, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, and other healthcare professionals can significantly improve patient outcomes. Through effective communication and shared decision-making, interprofessional teams can ensure comprehensive care for patients with mental health conditions. For example, a study by Javedh (2020) found that interprofessional collaboration between pharmacists and psychiatrists led to better medication adherence and treatment outcomes in patients with schizophrenia.

#### *4.1.2 Training and education:*

Training and education are essential components for pharmacists to provide high-quality services in mental health care. Pharmacist-led mental health clinics and workshops can enhance their knowledge and skills in managing psychiatric medications, conducting medication reviews, and providing counseling to patients with mental health disorders. For instance, a systematic review by O'Reilly (2020) demonstrated that pharmacist-led interventions, such as medication therapy management and patient education, improved medication adherence and clinical results in individuals with depression and anxiety.

#### *4.1.3 Technology integration:*

Integrating technology into pharmacist services can streamline processes, improve communication, and enhance patient care in mental health settings. Electronic health records, telepharmacy services, and medication management apps enable pharmacists to access patient data, communicate with healthcare providers, and monitor medication adherence remotely. Studies have shown that technology integration in mental health care can improve medication safety, reduce medication errors, and increase patient engagement. For example, a study by Rubio-Valera (2014) found that utilizing a telepsychiatry service in collaboration with pharmacists improved access to care and medication management for patients in rural areas.

#### *4.1.4 Patient-centered care models:*

Implementing patient-centered care models is essential for pharmacists to provide individualized care and support to patients with mental health conditions. Collaborative care agreements, motivational interviewing, and shared decision-making allow patients to actively contribute to their treatment plans and improve treatment outcomes. For instance, a study by Werremeyer (2020) highlighted the effectiveness of collaborative care models, where pharmacists worked closely with patients and other healthcare providers to enhance treatment therapy and address mental health needs.

In summary, interprofessional collaboration, training and education, technology integration, and patient-centered care models are key strategies to enhance pharmacist services in mental health care. By implementing these strategies, pharmacists can take a great part in improving medication management, treatment outcomes, and overall well-being for patients with mental health disorders.

Further research and implementation of these strategies are necessary to optimize pharmacist services and improve mental health care delivery.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, pharmacists take a great part in mental health care by offering a range of services that can significantly impact patient outcomes. From medication management and adherence support to mental health education and counseling, pharmacists can help improve medication safety, efficacy, and overall well-being of individuals with mental health conditions. Collaborative care models that involve pharmacists working closely with other healthcare providers have shown promising results in optimizing medication regimens, reducing adverse events, and enhancing patient outcomes. Further research is required to better understand the full effect of pharmacist services on mental health care and to identify additional chances for pharmacists to contribute to the mental health of patients. Overall, pharmacists are crucial members of the mental health care team, and their expertise and involvement can greatly enhance the quality and wellbeing of care for individuals with mental health conditions.

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