

Journey into Uncharted Waters: Technicians Making Waves in Pharmacy Teams

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Problem:

- With increasing pressures on healthcare systems, pharmacists need to innovate and increase efficiency to review an increasing number of patients. To achieve this, increasing the scope of the Pharmacy Technician role from a traditional supply-centred role to a clinical-support role was explored.



- A Clinical Support Technician (CST) role was created within the Acute Medical Team (AMT) and Aged-Care Mental Health Team (ACMHT) with the aim of assisting pharmacists in their daily tasks to enable pharmacists to focus on tasks requiring clinical expertise.

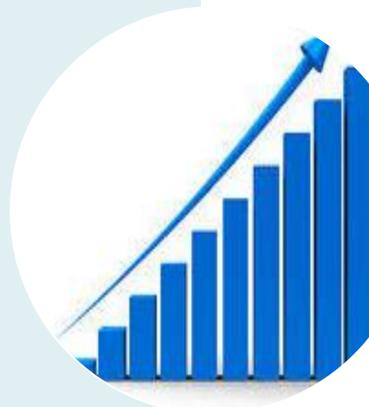


Action:

- Training plans were developed including electronic Medical Record and professional communication education.
- Key duties of the CST included:
 - Information-gathering for medication histories
 - Attending patient-flow meetings to identify possible discharges and triage medication-related inquiries
 - Assisting with the preparation of discharge medications

Outcomes:

- After a seven-month period, the AMT Technician was processing an average of 135 discharges/month (61% of total AMT discharges with an average 3 items and 8 minutes/discharge) and the ACMHT technician processing 102 discharges/month (54% of total ACMHT discharges with an average 5.5 items and 15 minutes/discharge).
- The AMT Technician assisted in information-gathering for an average of 14.6 patients/day.
- Ongoing monitoring of the types of discharges prepared by the technician has helped target strategies for increasing efficiencies.



Conclusion:

This innovative role highlights the significant role technicians can play as part of pharmacy teams in providing clinical care to patients. Within an eleven-month period this role has evolved to include technicians as an indispensable part of the team. Ongoing improvements are targeting increasing the amount of discharges processed by the CST to further alleviate pressures in the dispensary and improve patient flow.

