A participatory process to develop a naloxone, buprenorphine, and syringe safety intervention for community pharmacies

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Objective

We used a participatory design process with multiple stakeholders to integrate two evidence-based opioid safety-focused training toolkits (MOON and RESPOND) and to enhance content related to buprenorphine dispensing and nonprescription syringe sales.

Background

Pharmacies are well positioned to mitigate opioid risks through provision of naloxone to people taking opioid medications and supplying nonprescription syringes for safe injection.

Many pharmacists and technicians are unsure of how to address these topics with patients and some may harbor stigma towards people who use drugs.

Methods

• MOON materials focused on naloxone knowledge and dispensing; RESPOND emphasized communication strategies and importance of opioid safety screenings.
• We formed external advisory committees (EACs) across each state comprised of pharmacists, policy makers, community health workers, and researchers (n=20) to provide feedback via online surveys and presentations to local task forces.
• Three in-person focus groups with people who use drugs (n=17) in one urban and two rural areas were held.
• Toolkits included a continuing education (CE) online course, academic detailing, as well as pharmacist-and patient-facing materials.

Results

• EAC survey responses and task force discussions need to focus online courses and academic detailing on:
  1) naloxone assessment,
  2) counseling, and
  3) pharmacy workflow.

Pharmacy Naloxone Key Points
1. Review pharmacy distribution and therapeutic use
2. Provide guidelines for intervention
3. Provide communication strategies

• New content and tool enhancement areas per EAC:
  1) buprenorphine effectiveness,
  2) concomitant medication monitoring,
  3) prescriber communication,
  4) reducing stigma at syringe sale,
  5) community benefit of syringe sales, and importance of safe disposal.

• Focus group participants discussed toolkit refinement:
  1) reduce stigma,
  2) present educational material in pictures
  3) offer syringe disposal container
  4) use trainings and more real world scenarios

Conclusion

• Adaptation and enhancement of a comprehensive evidence-based toolkit for pharmacists was formalized through a participatory process with multiple stakeholders.
• Community engagement in intervention development enhances the validity and meaning of materials for stakeholders.

Online CE-Accredited Course

Pharmacy Materials

Patient-facing

Pharmacy team-facing