

Collaboration between community pharmacists and general practitioners

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Interprofessional collaboration between community pharmacists (CPs) and general practitioners (GPs) is essential to optimize medication use and prevent medication errors. It is also important for an efficient utilization of the health care resources. CPs and GPs are interdependent on a daily basis, yet the collaboration between them is limited, and should be improved. Research on CP-GP collaboration has found that the interpersonal aspects of collaboration is especially important. We used the method of meta-ethnography to synthesize findings from eleven qualitative studies from seven different countries. All studies contained findings regarding interpersonal aspects of CP-GP collaboration. Positioning theory was applied as a theoretical framework to guide our focus towards the CPs' and GPs' positioning of themselves and one another. We identified different positions and storylines held by the two professions.

Our findings suggest that the CPs are the ones who have to make the changes in order to enhance the collaboration with the GPs. One of the factors that both CPs and GPs perceived as important in order to achieve and obtain a successful collaboration, was a proactive approach by the CPs towards the GPs. This approach should comprise the delivery of specific clinical advice, as well as taking responsibility for this advice. The CPs should try to replace the old storyline about their group being less responsible, with a new storyline, where they use their unique competencies to improve patient care by making clear recommendations, have the confidence to stand up for these recommendations, and thus also share responsibility with the GPs for the outcomes, being positive or negative. When the GPs experience the CPs making clear recommendations that improve patient outcomes, our findings suggest that their trust in the CPs increases. This would be an important step in the right direction towards working for a better collaboration and the common goal of improved patient care.