

Background

- Data collection and interventions to address social determinants of health (SDoH) have been identified as key priorities for primary health care.¹
- The SPARK Tool was developed by the Upstream Lab to assist primary health care providers in collecting data about poverty and related SDoH.²
- The role of pharmacists in screening for SDoH has not been clearly defined in the Canadian context.

Objectives

- To explore public perspectives on the pharmacist's role in screening for SDoH.
- To inform future implementation of the SPARK Tool in community pharmacies.

Methods

- This public engagement (PE) project uses an integrated KT approach with knowledge users and patient partners as core team members.
- The project uses the deliberative dialogue method described by McMaster Health Forum.³
- Two citizen engagement sessions with a total of 11 participants were hosted virtually, recorded and transcribed using MS Teams.
- Citizens were recruited from across the province to take part in one of two dialogue sessions.
- Qualitative analysis is ongoing, using the rapid and rigorous RADaR technique for applied research.⁴

Partners



Results

| Preliminary Themes | Illustrative Quote(s) |
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| The accessibility of community pharmacists offers great potential to tackle SDoH. | <p><i>"[Everyone] is gonna need some medication at some point in their lifetime. So, the most natural place [to implement this] is the pharmacy"</i></p> <p><i>"We know that most people don't have access to a social worker. But which healthcare professional do most people have access to—a pharmacist"</i></p> |
| Social conditioning may limit public acceptance of SDoH screening and interventions by pharmacists. | <p><i>"I have difficulty imagining pharmacists as someone with whom I can have a conversation about non-medical needs"</i></p> <p><i>"For us [expatriates] to accept the North American attitude towards the pharmacist [is a big step]...like I would never dare trust my dispenser back home."</i></p> |
| Expansions to current infrastructure (e.g., MyHealthNL), to support self-reporting, alongside pharmacist involvement may better support data collection. | <p><i>"We now have the [myHealthNL] app...could be a self-populated questionnaire?"</i></p> |
| An inclusive, trauma and disability informed approach to health and social care is necessary. | <p><i>"It would be immensely helpful if all of the [interventions and information] actually came with a lens of disability processing."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't know how I would feel if I go to my [health record] and see [information about] some housing crisis that I encountered. How am I going to react to that?"</i></p> |
| Improved communication about the role of pharmacist, as well as communication between the pharmacist, other health professionals, and their patients is necessary. | <p><i>"Communication really is the ground level of going forward"</i></p> <p><i>"I feel like a lot of what a pharmacist can do, or a pharmacist's role, isn't really very well communicated to the public"</i></p> |

Discussion & Conclusion

- Generally, citizens who took part in our PE sessions saw value in pharmacists' screening for SDoH.
- Several needs, gaps, and opportunities were identified by citizen representatives which will inform the development of a more holistic approach to implementing the SPARK Tool in pharmacies.
- Leveraging the unique front-line position of community pharmacists may help to improve SDoH data collection and referrals to social care services in the primary care setting.

Acknowledgements

**This project is supported by
the Memorial University
Public Engagement Accelerator Fund**

References

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