

Coronavirus and Pharmacy Life

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Editorial

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ABSTRACT

The profession is well known for its high stress levels amongst staff, based on the data collected by National institute for occupational safety and health (NIOSH), pharmacists qualify as a profession with high suicide rate.

When the virus first hit, pharmacies were inundated with prescription volumes for inhalers and steroid drugs as prescribers and patients scrummaged for these items.

Pharmacists had to process acutely high NHS prescription volumes with sometimes less staff (due to the virus impacting their health and the rules around isolation).

EDITORIAL

The profession is well known for its high stress levels amongst staff, based on the data collected by National institute for occupational safety and health (NIOSH), pharmacists qualify as a profession with high suicide rate [1]. When the virus first hit, pharmacies were inundated with prescription volumes for inhalers and steroid drugs as prescribers and patients scrummaged for these items.

Pharmacists had to process acutely high NHS prescription volumes with sometimes less staff (due to the virus impacting their health and the rules around isolation). According to the Pharmaceutical services negotiation committee, the NHS application has a new feature that allows patients to view and change their EPS nomination [2]. This generally saves time and it does away with need of going to collect FP10s from General practitioners and drop them off at the pharmacy.

The ripple effect of the pandemic demands that all persons in influential positions ensure that laws are adhered to to aid mitigate the increase of Coronavirus cases [3], according to Valeria fiore and Grace Lewis, "The Labour Party is calling on the government to commission England's pharmacies to help deliver a 24/7 COVID-19 vaccination programme by the end of February". This cry has been heard and big chain pharmacies have been employed to administer coronavirus vaccinations.

Impact on Pharmacy governance

We can be thankful that the NHS was already geared up to the digital era that we live in-EP5 and PMR systems allowed for remotely ordering prescriptions and even prescribing and processing controlled drugs electronically [4]. We can expect that the digital revolution will only be accelerated by the new paradigm of 'lockdown culture': But pharmacists fear greatly how the multiples are lobbying for 'remote supervision' under the pretext of alleged 'lack of supply of pharmacists' and the new distancing regulations with their knock-on effects [5]. This is a moot point since pharmacists note that they are in fact in over supply. Even retired pharmacists were urged to re-enter the pharmacy employment world to help out. The GPhC lifted regulations to allow this. To some this seems grossly unfair and cynical of both the big multiples and the NHS-regulating government.

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