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## Pharmacists Play Critical Role in Improving Patient Health



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According to a study conducted by Scot H. Simpson, professor in the faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of Alberta, pharmacists on primary care teams can have a significant impact on the treatment of blood pressure in patients with Type 2 diabetes. The study titled "Pharmacists on primary care teams: Effect on antihypertensive medication management in patients with Type 2 diabetes" has been published in *Journal of the American Pharmacists Association*.

The study was part of a larger research project and the main study showed that the addition of pharmacists to primary care teams resulted in substantial improvements in patients with Type 2 diabetes. In his sub-study, Simpson wanted to further investigate in order to pinpoint the specific role pharmacists played to improve patient health and deconstruct the interventions that had a positive effect on patients with Type 2 diabetes.

For the purpose of this investigation, patients were divided into two groups. Those in the intervention group were counselled directly by two pharmacists, who worked with the patients' physicians as part of primary care teams at several clinics within Edmonton's Southside Primary Care Network. Patients in the control group had no interaction with a primary care pharmacist.

The findings showed that 42 percent of patients in the intervention group had at least one change to their blood pressure drugs as compared to 26 percent of the patients in the control group. It was also found that patients who had a change in their blood pressure drugs were twice as likely to have an improvement in their blood pressure as compared to patients who did not have any change.

With respect to the role pharmacists play, Simpson found that the pharmacists involved in study collaborated with the physicians with respect to the patient's medications and treatment options. They were thus able to suggest alternative medicines or changes in dosage that resulted in a reduction in the patient's blood pressure. He found that pharmacists used their training to review the patient's history and were able to find optimum solutions for patients.

Simpson's findings support the importance of interprofessional health collaboration in treating patients. 'Adding pharmacists to the team to review medications identify drug-related problems and manage the treatment has a positive effect on blood pressure levels of patients with Type 2 diabetes,' says Simpson.

Source: [University of Alberta](#)

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