

Role of pharmacists in GPs crucial

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New research has found the co-location of pharmacists with Australian GPs in primary healthcare clinics optimised the safety and provision of medication used by patients.

New research has shown a role for pharmacists within general practice (GP) clinics is a key solution to help prevent medication errors by patients and health professionals.

A Monash University study, led by Edwin Tan from the Centre for Medicine Use and Safety, explored the experiences of general practitioners, pharmacists and patients with the integration of pharmacists into general practice clinics in Australia.

The study published in the journal, *BMJ Open*, found the co-location of pharmacists with Australian GPs in primary healthcare clinics optimised the safety and provision of medication used by patients.

Practice pharmacists were placed in two primary healthcare clinics in Victoria, providing patient consultations, education sessions, drug information services and quality assurance activities. The integration process was examined over six months.

Mr Tan said the placement of highly trained pharmacists within Australian GP settings improved patient health outcomes, the use of

medicines by patients, quality of prescribing, staff drug-knowledge and professional collaboration.

"Pharmacist consultations with patients resulted in resolution of medication-related problems and improved [medication adherence](#)," Mr Tan said.

"A large proportion of Australians take some kind of medicine every day and pharmacists can offer extensive advice and education to detect and prevent drug-related problems that can result in hospitalisations.

"The [pharmacist](#)'s role was well accepted by GPs, [patients](#), staff and pharmacists. GPs and staff particularly valued having the pharmacist as part of their team, improving access to medicines information and offering reassurance with medicines management. Overall, the results of this study support the benefits and feasibility of practice pharmacists in the Australian health system, and may help inform local policy and debate on this topic."

It is hoped a government-subsidised program will be available in the future, similar to collaborative services already funded for nursing staff and allied [health professionals](#) to work in co-located settings.

Provided by Monash University

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