

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From Knowledge to Practice: Strengthening Medication Error Reporting Practices Among Community Pharmacists in Malaysia.

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To the Editor,

We read with interest the article by Baharudin et al. entitled “Knowledge, Attitude and Perception of Community Pharmacists in Kulim towards Preventing Medication Errors” published in the *Asian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences* [1]. The authors should be commended for addressing a timely and underexplored topic namely, medication error (ME) prevention within community pharmacy settings. Their finding that nearly all respondents demonstrated good knowledge, positive attitudes, and favourable perceptions toward ME prevention reflects the growing awareness of patient safety principles among Malaysian community pharmacists. In this context, we are currently conducting a similar study among community pharmacists in Selangor, aiming to build upon these findings and provide a broader understanding of medication safety practices across different states in Malaysia.

However, the findings from this study raise the question of whether good knowledge and awareness truly translate into consistent ME reporting in practice. Despite a good understanding of ME concepts among

pharmacists, under-reporting continues to be a persistent challenge in community settings [2]. This gap limits opportunities for system-wide learning and improving patient safety.

In Malaysia, the Pharmaceutical Services Programme (PSP) under the Ministry of Health (MOH) established the Medication Error Reporting System (MERS) in 2009 as the national platform for documenting and analysing ME reports. Through this system, healthcare professionals are encouraged to voluntarily report both actual errors and near-misses that occur during the medication use process. Reporting is strongly encouraged among practitioners from both the public and private sectors, with submissions accepted through both online and offline channels. In 2023, a total of 65,916 ME were reported [3], mainly by pharmacists from the public sector.

Community pharmacies often operate as private entities with limited integration into medication safety frameworks. Community pharmacists may encounter barriers, including a lack of obligation



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to report and a lack of awareness of suitable reporting systems. These challenges mirror international observations that community pharmacists, despite positive attitudes [4], often do not engage actively in voluntary ME reporting.

To bridge this knowledge–practice gap, there is a need to cultivate a stronger reporting culture among community pharmacists. Other countries have implemented mandatory ME reporting programmes focused specifically on community pharmacies and have observed promising outcomes in increasing reporting rates [5]. However, this approach may not be directly applicable to the Malaysian setting, where the legal framework and enforcement mechanisms differ. As a starting point, a simple incentivisation strategy could be considered, similar to the adverse drug reaction (ADR) reporting system, in which continuing professional development (CPD) points are awarded to pharmacists who submit ADR reports. Collaborative engagements between the PSP MOH and the Malaysian Pharmacists Society could help in designing targeted interventions to encourage active participation of community pharmacists in national medication safety initiatives. Building a robust and transparent reporting culture within community pharmacy practice will not only enhance patient safety but also align Malaysia’s efforts with the World Health Organization’s “Medication Without Harm” global initiative.

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Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Authors’ Contributions

SB was responsible for all aspects of the study, including concept, design, definition of intellectual content, literature search, data

acquisition, manuscript preparation, manuscript writing, and editing; LI contributed to the concept, definition of intellectual content, literature search, manuscript editing, and manuscript review.

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