



COMMUNITY PHARMACY FOUNDATION
COMPLETED GRANT SYNOPSIS

ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET AND SOCIAL NETWORKS USE BY INDEPENDENT COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS

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Objectives	
1) Determine the extent that community pharmacists use text messaging, email, Facebook, Twitter and/or other social networks to provide professional care services (medication counseling, refill reminders, adherence monitoring, etc.); 2) Identify perceptions of community pharmacists towards using social media for patient-pharmacist communication; 3) Determine the degree to which community pharmacists have developed and employed their pharmacy websites for provision of drug information and patient care services.	
Methods	
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mail survey (with an option to complete online) conducted during January-February, 2012 ✓ 25-item pretested survey instrument ✓ Sampling: random sample of independent community pharmacists in Texas ✓ Sample size: 1196 actively practicing, independent community pharmacists
Study endpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Frequency of social media use by independent pharmacists for professional purposes ✓ Perceptions of pharmacists towards use of social media for professional communication ✓ Availability of pharmacy websites and description of content offered
Results	
<p>Study response rate was 24% (284 completed and usable questionnaires). Respondent demographics: mean (SD) age: 54 (11) years, gender: 70% male; degree: 83% BS Pharmacy; mean (SD) years since graduation 28 (13); store owners: 60% (167). To communicate with a patient 36% (102) used email, 47% (86) used text message and 7% (19) used Facebook. 91% (258) of pharmacists were familiar with the term 'social media'. Internal consistency (Chronbach's α) of perceptions towards social media scale (12 items) was 0.89. About 55% (154) of the respondents reported maintaining a pharmacy website. Among some of the resources available through the websites, pharmacists reported the following: links to other health resources (33%), tips on medication use (23%), tips on being compliant (20%), opportunity to schedule an appointment with a pharmacist (11%).</p>	
Conclusion	
<p>This study was the first statewide assessment of social media use and perceptions towards use among independent community pharmacists. Due to overall positive perceptions towards use of social media for professional purposes (over 70% of pharmacists consider social media can be used effectively to improve patient-pharmacist communication), its use may be further expanded through pharmacist training and education. More studies in other states, as well as nationwide, are warranted to better understand the patterns of internet and social media use in the daily professional activities of community pharmacists.</p>	