The Practicing Pharmacist’s Perspective: Alcohol Consumption and Access to Resources

Jordan Fischer, PharmD Candidate and Misty Gonzalez, PharmD, BCPP

BACKGROUND

• It is reported that 10-12% of healthcare professionals will develop a substance use disorder in their career
• Stigma is a common barrier to seeking help for mental health or substance use related conditions as a healthcare professional
• Most states have a confidential network of help and support for pharmacists seeking or already in recovery

OBJECTIVE

• To identify the trends of alcohol consumption among practicing pharmacists and the need for opportunities to enhance their wellbeing and support

METHODS

Study Design

• Anonymous online survey regarding alcohol consumption and awareness of professional resources available
• Survey sent out by email with one-week follow-up, and closed after one month
• SIUE IRB #2144, Exempt

Study Population

• Inclusion: practicing pharmacists in the U.S.
• Distributed to practicing pharmacists that were members of national organizations in addition to a local hospital system and academic networks

Data Analysis

• Descriptive statistics

RESULTS

Figure 1: Years of Practice

• Number of respondents: 121
• 71.1% female and 27.9% male
• 46.8% spent 40 or more hours per week at work
• 10.8% of participants had not had a drink containing alcohol in the past year
• Episodes of binge drinking reported:
  • 14.4 % every 3 months
  • 3.6 % every month
  • 2.7 % weekly
• Top reasons for consumption included: socialization, celebrations, relaxation, peer influence, relaxation, and stress
• 11.7% had researched resources for themselves or a colleague
• 55.3% of participants were unaware of professional help programs

Figure 2: Practice Site

• 42.3% of participants had at least one episode of binge drinking in the last year
• Results suggest there is need for employee well-being resources
• Professional repercussions did not seem to discourage most from seeking help for themselves or a colleague
• Pharmacists should be able to optimally use resources available to them

LIMITATIONS

• Underreporting number of drinks
• Not all questions were applicable to a person if they did not drink

CONCLUSION

• Many pharmacists surveyed consumed alcohol in the past year
• The lack of awareness of professional networks stands out as a pitfall in a pharmacist’s well being
• More attention should be brought to this to improve knowledge of these helpful resources

AUTHOR CONTACT

• Jordan Fischer, PharmD Candidate
• Nothing to Disclose
• Jofisch@siue.edu