# Community Pharmacist’s Role in Supporting Persons with Alzheimer’s Disease

## INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer’s Disease is increasingly prevalent in the US:
- In 2018, 5.3 million Americans with Alzheimer’s disease were identified in the US.
- It is estimated that by 2020, numbers will increase to 7.1 million Americans with Alzheimer’s Disease, which is an estimated increase of 1.1 million between 2010 and 2020.
- It is the 6th leading cause of death in the US.
- Increased from 25% most burdensome disease in the US in 1990 to 12% in 2010.

### Pharmacies are the most accessible health care professionals
- Pharmacists in the community can provide medication education as well as information on local support groups.
- Pharmacists can play an even larger role in rural areas where specialized services are scarce.

### OBJECTIVES
- Understand the burden associated with persons with Alzheimer’s Disease and their caregivers.
- Identify current research that outlines the need for pharmacist intervention and potential areas for involvement.

## METHODS

### Literature Search and Data Analysis
- Conducted a literature search using PubMed, Ovid, and Google Scholar.
- Articles were identified relating to Alzheimer’s Disease, caregivers, burden, and pharmacists.
- Summarized the findings of each article.
- Student reviewers examined each article and identified themes related to objectives.
- Identified need for pharmacist involvement and further research.
- Themes and future study ideas were validated by faculty members.

## RESULTS

### CURRENT RESEARCH

- Community pharmacist frequently encounter persons with dementia and their caregivers.
- By enhancing skills, caregivers were shown to achieve a sense of control and feel less overwhelmed.
- European professional bodies see community pharmacies as a promising setting for dementia care services.
- 96% of caregivers get medications filled at the same pharmacy as the patients for which they are caring.
- Community pharmacy staff expressed a need for training in communicating and caring for patients with dementia.
- Caregivers taking part in enhanced counseling and support treatment showed reduced depressive symptoms.
- 1% of caregivers have high perception of burden, with 23% with feeling symptoms of depression and 20% with anxiety.

### POTENTIAL INTERVENTIONS

- **Education and Training Programs**
  - Offer medication management and help with clinical services.
  - Identify patients at-risk for non-adherence and send out reminder calls.
  - Develop programs and material for patients and caregivers to better understand the disease and medications.
  - Customize services for individuals by utilizing home delivery services and pill box fills.
- **Supportive Care**
  - Develop a dementia patient-friendly environment within the community pharmacy.
  - Develop a list of community referral resources to provide to patients and caregivers in the pharmacy as needed.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Community pharmacists are in a unique position to help identify individuals that may benefit from interventions.
- Increased pharmacist involvement in the care of those with Alzheimer’s Disease could improve clinical outcomes.
- Pharmacists can help improve caregiver’s quality of life.

## REFERENCES

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