



A Pharmacist's Role in Oral Oncolytics

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Background

- Oral oncolytics are anticancer medication that are self-administered by patients.
- Recently, anticancer therapies are shifting from intravenous infusion from medical facilities to patients administering by themselves orally.
- 35% of new oncologic medications that are in development are oral oncolytics.
- As an expertise in medication management, the role of the pharmacist is important because reduced clinical oversight may lead to symptom mismanagement, nonadherence, disease progression, and financial burden.

Objective

The primary goal of this research is to provide physicians and other healthcare professionals with a better understanding of what role pharmacists have in oral oncolytics and determine who pharmacists typically interact with.

Methods

This presentation categorizes the different roles of a pharmacist into three different sections: patient education, finance, and education among physicians. Although pharmacists have other roles and responsibilities, only the most important of the responsibilities were included due to the lack of research to this new field. The presentation utilizes 8 articles to examine the role of pharmacists in oral oncolytics. The databases that were primarily used for this study included PubMed and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The keywords used to find information on these materials included pharmacy, pharmacist, role, and oral oncolytics. The search filters that were utilized ensured that the articles used would be from the last 7 years.

Discussion

- Patient education
 - Interventions lead by pharmacists showed advancements in patient education and adherence
 - Patients were able to get a better understanding of their oral oncolytic therapies, that promoted safe and productive medication adherence.
 - Pharmacists assistant in the medication education encourages patients to advocate for themselves with their newfound knowledge.
 - Patient education is crucial because patients should be able to self-identify side effects since oral oncolytic are taken without the presence of a medical team.
- Finance
 - Pharmacists are constantly working to find ways to reduce financial responsibilities on patients to ensure they are able to get the medications they need.
 - These resources are, but not limited to, national organization funds, copay assistance cards, and manufacturer sponsored patient assistant programs.
 - By taking a systematic approach, the pharmacists help to elevate not only the patient's financial burden, but also prescribers who struggle with navigating the complex process of copay assistance and medication authorization when it comes to specialty medication.
 - For patients who do not have insurance there are programs set int place such as manufacturer sponsored patience assistance.
- Education among physicians
 - The involvement of pharmacists when creating pharmacologic therapies helps to recognize possible drug interacts that could potentially bring harm to a patient.
 - The collaborative system between the physician and pharmacist strengthened provider relationships and decreased the time spent reviewing oral oncolytic prescriptions.

Conclusion

Pharmacists are typically known for their role in dispensing drugs and medications, however, their role is not limited to just that. In addition to patient education to promote medication adherence, pharmacists are often involved in education physicians about drug interactions to prevent potential harm to the patient. Due to the amount of medications, health conditions, and mentality of the patients, a pharmacist's role is invaluable to those who utilize oral oncolytics and promote adherence.

A limitation of this study was that because oral oncolytics is still a new field, there was not a lot of diverse information regarding a pharmacists' role in oral oncolytics than what is typically seen with other types of medications.

Despite the lack of information from recent studies, it can be determined that pharmacists are an invaluable member of an oncology patient's healthcare team as it pertains to patient education.

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