

Exploration of Pharmacists' Understanding, Acceptance, and Barriers to Implementation of Trauma-Informed Care

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BACKGROUND: the experience of trauma is common and has a profound impact on emotional and physical well-being, as evidenced by the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) Study. Trauma informed care (TIC) is a collection of essential tools to utilize when approaching care for those who have experienced past trauma or ACEs. The level of pharmacists' understanding and perceived ability to implement TIC has not been established in current literature.

OBJECTIVE: the purpose of this study is to assess pharmacists' understanding, acceptance, and barriers to implementing TIC in their practice settings.

METHODS: a survey completion request was sent via email to all members of the Illinois Pharmacists Association (IPhA), Missouri Pharmacy Association (MPA), and pharmacist alumni of Southern Illinois University (SIUE) School of Pharmacy. The survey consisted of a hybrid of the 21-item- Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice Related to Trauma Informed Care tool, along with additional questions specific to barriers related to pharmacy practice experience. SIUE IRB approval was received prior to survey dissemination.

RESULTS: a total of 134 pharmacists completed the survey, with 43.3% representing community pharmacists. All pharmacist respondents agreed that trauma affects physical, emotional, and mental well-being, and close to 80% agreed that TIC is essential for working effectively with patients. However, only 18% of pharmacists reported having a comprehensive understanding of TIC. Limited personal knowledge and understanding of TIC was also the largest barrier pharmacists reported to practicing TIC.

CONCLUSION: there is a disconnect between pharmacist understanding of the impact of trauma and how to implement trauma-informed practices. Expanded training opportunities in TIC for pharmacists is an essential next step.