IDENTIFICATION OF PATIENTS' NEEDS TOWARD PHARMACY SERVICES IN SAMARINDA, INDONESIA– A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Pharmacy supposed to be able to provide the services that accommodate all of the patient's needs. There are several factors to satisfy patients, such as product, price, process, and people. This research aims to patients' needs toward pharmacy services to help the pharmacist satisfying the patients. The questionnaire composed of 8 items based on the marketing mix theory. Study took place in Samarinda, Indonesia from October to December 2018. There were 83 people responded to survey questions. Respondents' answers counted by the Likert scale 1 until 5 and analyzed by ranking the mean score of each answer. Analysis from the questionnaire study showed that the highest patients' needs toward pharmacy were a pharmacy that provides complete drugs (mean of 4.8313), complete drug labeling (4.7470), professional staff (4.6988) and affordable drug prices (4.5422).

Keywords: Patients' needs, complete drugs, complete drug labeling, professional staff, and affordable drug prices, telepharmacy, and pharmacist home care

INTRODUCTION

Pharmacy is the most accessible healthcare facility for society in Indonesia. There is a large number of pharmacies in Indonesia, approximately 26,658 pharmacies.[1] Nowadays pharmacy services has shifted its orientation from medicine oriented to patient-oriented.[2,3] As the most reachable and has a massive number of the healthcare facility, pharmacy is supposed to be able to provide services to accommodate the needs of patients. Pharmacists as manager of a pharmacy should be able to identify the needs of patients and play a proactive role in becoming effective healthcare providers for the society.[4] The outcome of this action is to develop a focused strategy to attract new patients to the pharmacy, maintain customers, and increase patient loyalty to pharmacies. These studies are useful for pharmacies in evaluating services provided and challenges pharmacies to innovate.

Based on a survey in a research the most needed services by patients are easily accessible locations, friendliness and ability of staff to answer questions. The results shown by the survey differ from the research conducted in Vietnam.[5] This study found that the factor of the presence of pharmacists (staff) was the factor most needed by patients in the service at the pharmacy, followed by drug prices. These differences can occur due to different demographic factors between the two surveys including factors such as respondent's age, income, gender, race, nationality, occupation, religion, and education. Unfortunately, there are no similar studies in Indonesia. Therefore, this research important to provide an overview of the needs of patients in Indonesia, especially Samarinda City.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Methods

1. Study Sites

The study was conducted in Samarinda, Indonesia From October to December 2018. Samarinda city has a population of 727.500 people. Permission from pharmacist was requested and obtained to approach the patients.

2. The questionnaire

The questionnaire has been made from the literature study of the patient service need in pharmacy and experts opinion, and validity test to the experts. There were 8 questions represent marketing mix factors such as product, price, process, and people. Patients will answer the questions by Likert scales 1-5. 5 point means strongly agree, and 1 point means strongly disagree.

Here are the questions of questionnaire such as seen at **table 1**.

Table 1	The complete list of questions used in the survey
No.	Questions
Q1	I need a pharmacy that sells complete drugs.
Q2	I need a pharmacy that sells drugs at affordable prices compared to other pharmacies
Q3	I need a pharmacy that has online delivery services.
Q4	I need a pharmacy that has professional staff.
Q5	I need a pharmacist to phone-call me to monitor my condition.
Q6	I need a pharmacist to come to my home to monitor my condition.
Q7	I need complete drug labeling regarding the administration and frequency of my drugs
Q8	I need a pharmacy that has a physician's practice according to my illness

The questionnaire has been validated by 3 experts for checking the ambiguities, understandings, and judging for the relevance of questions. Then 6 naive people were participated validating a questionnaire for checking the ambiguities and understandings of the questions.

3. Data collection

Data were taken using an online questionnaire distributed to the patients that have come to the pharmacy. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling and aged 17 and over. Patients who agreed to fill the online questionnaire would receive the link to the Google Form.

4. Data analysis

The questionnaire was analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 for Windows. The analysis included the means of the responses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Demographic data

Demographic data of respondents can be seen at **table 2.**

Table 3	Demographic data of respondents
	Frequency (%)
Gender	
Male	33 (37.5%)
Female	50 (62.5%)
Age	
17- 24 y	54 (65.06%)
25- 34 y	4 (4.82%)
35 – 49 y	15 (18.07%)
50- 64 y	8 (9.64%)
65 y and above	2 (2.41%)

2. Patients' responses

Responses were analyzed by counting the mean of the Likert scale on each question. Questions were signed by Q1 until Q8.

Table 2	Mean of responses by the questions		
No.	Factor	Mean	Frequency Agree and Strongly Agree
Q1	Sell complete drugs	4.8313	79 (95.18 %)
Q2	Affordable price	4.5422	72 (86.75 %)
Q3	Online delivery services	3.7711	52 (62.65%)
Q4	Professional staff	4.7470	77 (92.77%)
Q5	Telepharmacy	3.7229	42 (50.60%)
Q6	Home-care	3.3855	38 (45.78%)
Q7	Complete drug labeling	4.6988	77 (92.77%)
Q8	Physician's practice according to the illness	4.3735	69 (83.13%)

The sample's responses ranked by the most to the least are as follows.
1. Sell complete drugs (Q1)
2. Professional staff (Q4)
3. Complete drug labeling (Q7)

4. Affordable price (Q2)
5. Physician's practice according to the illness (Q8)
6. Online delivery services (Q3)
7. Telepharmacy (Q5)
8. Home-care (Q6)

This result differs from the previous study, the highest factor in 400 people in South Vietnam was professional staff, then the affordable price and the third was the product (good quality products and have wide range products).[5] The highest mean was Q1 (4.8313) which is patients need the pharmacy that provide complete drugs. This factor represented the product of the marketing mix theory. The previous study stated that a pharmacy which had a wide range of products was a leading factor of customer loyalty.[6,7,8,9] This is due to the information customers receive from the internet and their knowledge about the ingredients in drugs, OTC products, etc. all of this makes them loyal to a specific brand.[6] It is a huge challenge for pharmacies to have many products available to satisfy customer preferences.

The second place of the most needed services was Q4 which is patients need pharmacy that has the professional staff (4.7470). The pharmacist as known as the most professional staff in the pharmacy has to present at business hours. It has been known as the most important marketing mix factor that patients' needs.[3] Patients to expect a pharmacist to be able to advise them directly.[3] So that pharmacy should have a pharmacist's license badge clearly to make patients know a pharmacist is serving them.

The third place is Q3 which was pharmacy should concern about making a complete drug labeling (4.6988). Although there is so much information that patients can receive for the internet, clear labeling also the key factor of patients' needs. The complete drug labeling means that every dispensed drugs have to contain patient's name, name of drug, strength of drug, dose, frequency of administration, and duration of administration. These label present patients the correct information that they need for proper use of a dispensed drugs.[10] Failed to make a complete drug labeling lead to a medication error. Another factor that the pharmacies should be concern is the price (mean of 4.5422). Pricing should be close with competitors so that the pharmacy should concern to choose their suppliers to keep costs low to increase abilities competitive on price.

Surprisingly, the process of how the services delivered take the last place than other factors. Online drug delivery service, telepharmacy, home care, and availability of physicians according to illness in pharmacy which describes the process do not suit with the patient needs (mean of 3.771, 3.7229, 3.2855, and 4.3735 respectively). It means that pharmacists should educate the advantage of those services before applying that services at their pharmacy.

CONCLUSION

This research finding the needs of patients who come to the pharmacy. The most needed service was complete drugs, it means pharmacy supposed to be able to provide a wide variety of drugs. The second and third most needed service was professional staff and complete drug labeling. There was a surprise finding for the process that patients did not aware of the needs of telepharmacy, home care, and physician availability in pharmacy.

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