

The Impact of pharmacists consultations on patients with high blood pressure and diabetes mellitus; a systematic review

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ABSTRACT

good management, medicine adherence, and changes in lifestyle lead to control of diabetes and hyper- tension. Counseling patients is an approach to the management of hypertension and diabetes. Pharmacists' counseling can assist patients in understanding their medications, coping with the barriers of the treatment plans, and receiving emotional support. This study aimed to assess the impact of counseling by pharmacists on hypertensive and diabetic patients by reviewing the previous studies that assessed this subject. Online data- bases, including PubMed, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Elsevier, Scopus, and Springer, were searched for eligible articles between the years 2018 and 2024. The terms including "Pharmacists, Counselling, Outcomes, Diabetes mellitus, Diabetic, Hypertension, Hypertensive, Patients, HbA1C, SBP, and DBP" were used for the search process. The included original English articles reporting counseling of diabetic/and/or hypertensive patients by pharmacists. A total of eight articles met the inclusion criteria and were involved in this review. The total number of patients was 1,390; there were three studies that assessed counseling impact on T2DM patients, three studies conducted on hypertensive patients, and two studies conducted on patients with both diseases. Counseling diabetic and/or hypertensive patients by pharmacists resulted in potential improvement in the outcomes of diabetes and hypertension, improvement in body mass index, lipid profile, adherence to medication, knowledge, attitude, and practice, as well as health-related quality of life. Therefore, pharmacists have an important role in controlling diabetes and hypertension and improving patients' outcomes.

Keywords: Effects, impacts, counseling, pharmacists, diabetic patients, hypertensive patients.

Introduction

High blood pressure is a condition that involves a blood pressure(BP) measurement that is consistently elevated in two or more accurately measured BP readings on each of two or more assessments [1]. Hypertension is a global health issue with a global burden; the prevalence of hypertension persists to increase annually, and it is estimated that hypertension prevalence will affect 1.15 billion or 29% of the global population in 2025 [2]. Hypertension is more probably to occur among ethnic minority groups of African descent rather than whites in developing countries [1,3]. The prevalence of hypertension among African and White Americans is 45.2% and 29.1%, respectively [4]. The change in lifestyle, including shifting to sedentary life, increases the morbidity and mortality related to hypertension [5].

Type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is a chronic illness that is characterized by elevated levels of blood sugar. Proper management of T2DM is required to avoid several consequences and complications, such as complications of the heart, nerves, kidneys, and eyes [6]. In addition, complications of

diabetes can adversely impact the quality of life (QOL) of the patients [7]. Studies confirmed that reducing the complications of diabetes can be established by proper control of blood glucose [8,9]. Counseling of patients is one approach for the management of T2DM patients and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, including hypertension [3,6]. Counseling is a process of assistance provided to patients who face health issues by an expert known as a mentor or counselor. The objective of counseling is to assist individuals or patients in resolving their issues and achieving optimal personal progression [6]. Counseling can educate patients about the importance of healthy lifestyle alterations such as regular exercise and a balanced diet [10]. Controlling diabetes is dependent on the adherence of patients to their medication, modification of lifestyle, and frequent monitoring of blood sugar. Such actions can be affected by proper education and counseling of the patient [11]. Similar to T2DM, hypertension can be managed appropriately through counseling on lifestyle and among some patients with a combination of medications. Therefore, hypertensive patients need counseling [12]. Counseling patients by pharmacists can assist patients in understanding their medications, coping with the barriers of the treatment plans, and receiving emotional support. It was stated that pharmacist counseling has been identified as a considerably effective strategy in the management of T2DM [6]. Hence, this systematic review was performed to identify the impact of pharmacists' counseling on diabetic and hypertensive patients.

Subjects and Methods

Search strategy

Adoption of the PRISMA checklist guidance for systematic review [13] was guaranteed. Exploration of online databases was carried out to obtain studies related to the current study subject. Such databases included PubMed, Science Direct, Google Scholar, Elsevier, Scopus, and Springer. The search process was restricted to the articles published in the year 2018 and until now in 2024. Different terms were used for the search process as keywords, which were used in different combinations, including "Pharmacists, Counselling, Outcomes, Diabetes mellitus, Diabetic, Hypertension, Hypertensive, Patients, HbA1C, SBP, and DBP." All the obtained titles were revised thoroughly.

Eligibility criteria

The findings were then examined to exclude duplicate articles, articles published before the year 2018, and those reporting counseling by other personnel and did not focus on pharmacists only. Also, studies that reported counseling by pharmacists to patients with other diseases were excluded. In addition, the studies reported counseling of diabetic and/or hypertensive patients with other complications or chronic diseases were excluded. Therefore, all the included articles in this stage were articles reporting counseling of diabetic and/or hypertensive patients by pharmacists. The remaining articles were reviewed for study type to select original articles only and exclude other types such as reports, reviews, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. Only studies in the English language were defined as articles of relevance. The studies which lacked full-text and provided abstracts only were excluded. Also, articles with incomplete or overlapped data were excluded (Figure 1). Data review and analysis

The first step involved reviewing the abstracts to determine the data of interest, then full-text reviewing to extract the data. An Excel sheet was used to save and revise the extracted data. Then, such data were transferred to a pre-designed table to summarize the collected data under specific titles.

Results

A final number of eight studies met the eligible criteria and were included in this systematic review [14-21] (Table 1).

The articles were published between 2018 and 2024. The study design was heterogeneous between the groups and included pre- and post-cohort [14], interventional [15], cluster randomized controlled trial [16], experimental research method with a static group comparison [17], quasi-experimental with pre and post-test group [18], prospective, open-labeled randomized control trial [19], educational interventional prospective [20], and prospective interventional [21]. There were three studies enrolled T2DM patients [14,16,18], three studies enrolled hypertensive patients [17,19,20], and two studies

included both T2DM and hypertensive patients [15,21]. The total number of patients was 1,390; the number of T2DM patients was 385; the number of hypertensive patients was 620; and the number of both patients was

385. There were seven studies that included two groups: the control group, which included 677 patients, and the interventional group, which included 625 patients. One study included one group of 88 patients who were surveyed pre- and post-counseling [14], and one study was conducted on elderly patients [20].

The subject of counseling was reported in three studies and included counseling on blood sugar level HbA1C [14], counseling on antihypertensive drugs [17], and counseling on treatment outcomes and QOL [21]. The assessed outcomes of counseling included clinical outcomes [14,15,17-19,21], controlling glycemic status [18], adherence [15,17,18,20], health-related quality of life [16], KAP [15,19,21], [19,21].

The findings of the studies regarding blood glucose level (BGL), fasting plasma blood glucose (FPBG), and HbA1c, it was reported that BGL and HbA1c were significantly reduced after counseling [14], and HBA1c were significantly reduced among the interventioncategory after intervention ($p = 0.001$) and compared to the controls ($p = 0.0001$) [16]. In comparison to controls,the intervention group experienced a significant reduction in FPBG ($p < 0.0001$) [15,21]. In addition, FBG and HbA1c were reduced by 2.764 and 9.964, respectively, compared to noncounseling [18].

BP status was significantly improved in the interventional group compared to the control ($p < 0.001$) [20]; both systolic blood pressure (SBP) and diastolic bloodpressure (DBP) were significantly reduced among the intervention category ($p < 0.0001$) [15], SBP ($p = 0.03$)

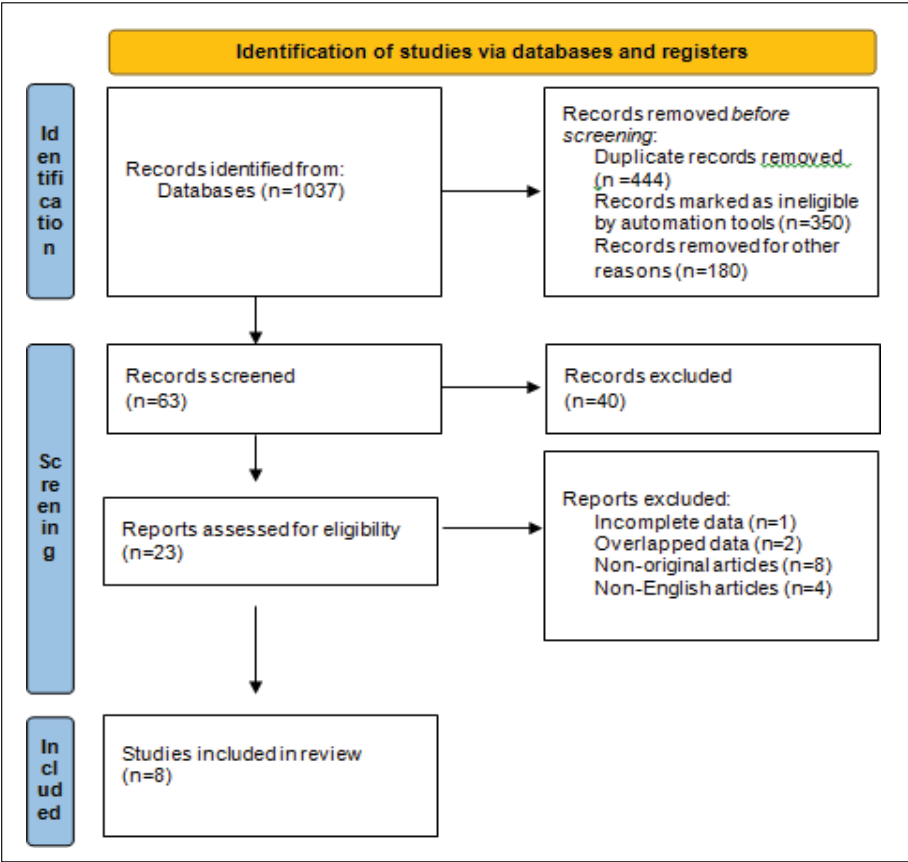


Figure 1. Planning of eligible criteria.

[19], ($p < 0.0001$) [21], and DBP ($p = 0.04$) [19], ($p =$

0.001) [21]. SBP was reduced significantly at the last counseling meeting compared to the first one among patients who received counseling ($p = 0.001$) [17].

Regarding BMI and lipid profile, BMI was significantly reduced among the intervention group ($p = 0.005$) [15]. Also, TC ($p = 0.002$), HDL ($p = 0.004$), LDL ($p = 0.02$), and TG ($p = 0.01$) were improved significantly among the intervention patients [18].

Regarding KAP of the patients, knowledge was significantly improved among the intervention group after counseling compared to controls ($p < 0.0001$) [15]. Interventional patients recorded significant improvement in KAP ($p < 0.0001$) [21] and higher mean percentage of knowledge ($p < 0.0001$), attitude ($p = 0.004$), and practice ($p < 0.0001$) compared to controls [19].

Regarding adherence to medication, compared to the control group, the interventional group reported significantly better adherence ($p < 0.0001$) [15], ($p = 0.006$) [18], and improvement ($p < 0.001$) [20] after the intervention. In addition, adherence was increased significantly among the intervention group at the last counseling meeting compared to the first one ($p = 0.008$) [17].

Improvements were found after intervention among the interventional group regarding both HRQOL ($p = 0.041$) [16] and QOL, including the physical component ($p = 0.0003$) [21].

Discussion

The role of the pharmacist in disease management includes education, monitoring, and referral. Pharmacists can provide counseling to patients about monitoring their condition and how to manage out-of-range levels [22]. Patient counseling is a broad concept that describes the procedure by which healthcare professionals try to increase patient knowledge regarding health issues [23]. During contact between patients and pharmacists, patients might ask pharmacists questions that they did not ask the physicians and can get further information on controlling their condition or disease [22]. Previous literature reported that intervention by pharmacists could improve patients' outcomes regarding different variables, including HbA1c, fasting blood sugar, BMI, BP, and lipid profile [24-26]. Therefore, this systematic review was carried out to identify the influence of counseling diabetic and hypertensive patients by pharmacists. The assessment of both hypertension and T2DM returns to the fact that diabetic patients have a 1.5-3 times increased prevalence of hypertension compared to nondiabetic ones [27].

Table 1. Summary of the collected data.

Author and publication year	Study design	Characteristics of patients	Counseling subject/and outcomes	Results and main findings
Rina et al. [14]	Pre and post-cohort study	-Disease: T2DM -N of patients = 88 patients	-Counseling on BGL and HbA1c -Impact of counseling on clinical outcomes in the management of T2DM	*Controlled BGLs before counseling was 27.7%, and after counseling was 89.8%. *Controlled HbA1C before counseling was 27.3%, and after counseling was 89.8%. *Counseling by pharmacists significantly improved the clinical outcomes of T2DM patients ($p = 0.000$).
Kwakye et al. [15]	Interventional	-Disease: Co-morbid hypertension and diabetes -N of patients = 338 *Case = 144 *Control = 194	----- -Impact of counseling on knowledge, adherence, and clinical outcomes body mass index (BMI, SBP, DPB, FPBG)	*Patients in the case group had better knowledge ($p < 0.0001$) and adherence to medication ($p < 0.0001$) compared to the control. *The case group had a significant reduction in BMI ($p = 0.005$), SBP ($p < 0.0001$), DBP ($p < 0.0001$), and FPBG ($p < 0.0001$).
Fajriansyah et al. [16]	Cluster randomized controlled trial	-Disease: T2DM -N of patients = 220 patients *Control = 111 *Interventional = 109	---- -Impact of counseling on health-related quality of life (HRQOL)	*The change in the HRQOL score (post-pre) was 0.01 in the control and 0.04 in the intervention group ($p = 0.041$). *HbA1c level was significantly reduced among the interventional group ($p = 0.001$), and it was significantly increased among controls ($p = 0.0001$), with a significant variation between the two groups ($p = 0.0001$).
Yusransyah et al. [17]	Experimental research method with a static group comparison	-Disease: Hypertension -N of patients = 96 *Control = 48 *Counseling group = 48	- Antihypertensive drug counseling -Impact on adherence and BP	*Counseling by pharmacists resulted in an increase in patient adherence to administration of antihypertensive drugs comparing the first meeting (mean = 21.40) with the last meeting (24.42) ($p = 0.008$) and systolic blood decreased at each meeting, where the first meeting was mean = 164 mmHg, and the last meeting recorded 145 mmHg of BP ($p = 0.001$) in the counseling group compared to the control group.

Hening et al. [18]	Quasi-experimental with pretest post-test group	-Disease: T2DM -N of patients = 77 *Control = 38 *Intervention = 39	----- -Impact on medication adherence, controlling glycemic status, and clinical outcomes (lipid profile, BP)	<p>*In the intervention group, medication adherence ($p = 0.006$) and clinical variables such as HbA1c ($p = 0.003$) and lipid profile, including total cholesterol (TC) ($p = 0.002$), high-density lipoprotein (HDL) ($p = 0.004$), low-density lipoprotein (LDL) ($p = 0.02$), triglycerides (TG) ($p = 0.01$) were improved, with no significant changes in the control groups regarding clinical parameters and adherence score was significantly reduced ($p = 0.008$).</p> <p>*In comparison to the controls, the intervention group displayed significant improvement in parameters, including fasting blood glucose (FBG) ($p = 0.05$) and HbA1c ($p < 0.0001$).</p> <p>*Based on multivariate analysis, counseling by hospital pharmacists was 2.764 times (OR = 2.764) and 9.964 times (OR = 9.964) better than no counseling in improving FBG and HbA1c, respectively.</p> <p>*After adjustment, medication adherence displayed no significance.</p>
Goruntla et al.[19]	Prospective, open-labeled, randomized control trial	-Disease: Hypertension -N of patients = 192 *Control = 97 *Interventional = 95	---- -Impact on knowledge, attitude, practice (KAP), and blood pressure control	<p>*There was a significant reduction in the mean SBP ($p = 0.03$) and DBP ($p = 0.04$) levels in the intervention compared to the control group at final follow-up visits.</p> <p>*The mean percentage of knowledge ($p < 0.0001$), attitude ($p = 0.004$), and practice ($p < 0.0001$) towards hypertension management were significantly improved in the intervention compared to controls.</p>
Shrestha et al.[20]	Educational interventional prospective	-Disease: Hypertension -N of patients = 332 elderly patients *Control = 166 *Interventional = 166	----- -Impact on antihypertensive medication adherence	<p>*Low adherence was found among 13.85% of interventional and 86.14% of controls.</p> <p>*The adherence score of the interventional group was significantly improved ($p < 0.001$) after the intervention, whereas no significant improvement occurred in the control group ($p = 0.3$) at follow-up.</p> <p>*Status of BP was improved in the intervention category than the control ($p < 0.001$).</p>
Puvvada and Muthukumar [21]	Prospective interventional	-Disease: Hypertension and T2DM -N of patients = 47	-Counseling on treatment outcomes and QOL	*Patient counseling by pharmacists resulted in improvement among the interventional group regarding KAP ($p < 0.0001$), SBP ($p < 0.0001$), DBP ($p = 0.001$), and levels of blood sugar ($p < 0.0001$) and QOL, including the aspects of physical

		*Control = 23 *Interventional = 24	-Impact on KAP	component (p = 0.0003). *No significant improvement was noted for controls.
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T2DM; type 2 diabetes mellitus, BGL; blood glucose level, BMI; body mass index, SBP; systolic blood pressure, DBP; diastolic blood pressure, FPG; fasting plasma blood glucose, HRQOL; health-related quality of life, VAS; visual analog survey, HBP; high blood pressure, HC; hypercholesterolemia, TC; total cholesterol, HDL; high-density lipoprotein, LDL, low-density lipoprotein, TG; triglycerides, FBG; fasting blood glucose.

The essential components of diabetic counseling include counseling about the disease, especially requiring adherence to medication; counseling regarding lifestyle modification, including diet, exercise, and physical activity; counseling regarding medications, counseling regarding complications; and counseling regarding maintaining blood sugar [22]. In the current analysis, only three studies reported the subject of counseling[14,17,21], whereas the remaining five studies did not report the subject of counseling. Similarly, a previous systematic review reported that most included studies did not report the material and methods used in pharmacist- led intervention on diabetes outcomes [28]. The co-existence of diabetes and hypertension is among almost 40%-60% of T2DM patients [27]. In the current analysis, there were two studies conducted on both T2DM and hypertension [15,21]. One study explored the role of community pharmacists in improving control of BP among patients with hypertension. The study demonstrated that pharmacists providing pharmaceutical care led to improvement in diastolic pressure and adherence to therapy [29]. In the current analysis, BP was significantly improved and controlled among patients who received counseling by pharmacists; both systolic blood pressure (SBP) and diastolic blood pressure (DBP) were significantly reduced after counseling among patients who received counseling.

Low levels of compliance and knowledge can lead to complications that can affect BP [30]. Consequently, adherence to medication can act as a deterrent to uncontrolled BP [5]. Also, awareness and adherence toward diabetes treatment can be increased by providing proper counseling to the patients with the help of pharmacists, nurses, and physicians [31-33]. In this analysis, adherence to medication was improved among patients who received counseling in all the studies that investigated adherence to medication, regardless of whether the population of the study was diabetic patients or hypertensive patients. In addition, the KAP of patients with hypertension and diabetes were improved after counseling, and this might explain the increase in adherence to medication. Increased KAP and adherence to medication would, in turn, improve BP and glycemic control, which in turn reduce the likelihood of severe complications.

A scoping review included 17 studies with 136,026 patients and focused on the effect of pharmacist-led intervention on medication adherence and clinical outcomes among hypertensive patients and hyperlipidemia. It was reported that such interventions by pharmacists were associated with improved adherence to medication by the patients but were less likely to be consistently associated with the attainment of clinical outcomes [34]. However, in the current systematic review, it was found that not only did adherence improve, but BP did as well. In addition, BMI and lipid profile were significantly improved among patients who received counseling.

Complications associated with diabetes negatively affect the QOL of the patients; QOL is defined as a multidimensional term that refers to the total well-being of an individual, including social, psychological, and physical health status[7]. Counseling of patients can motivate patients for better QOL and can lead to improvement in QOL [23]. One of the most significant goals of health interventions and counseling is to improve the QOL of patients affected by diseases [27]. Only two studies in the current analysis focused on QOL and HRQOL; however, both studies reported improvements. HRQOL was significantly improved after counseling among the patients, but the improvement of QOL was reported regarding the physical component. In chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension, HRQOL is a more important outcome. HRQOL has been found to be poorer among diabetic patients [27]. Also, hypertension was found to be associated with adverse outcomes regarding HRQOL [35].

A recent systematic review included 15 studies that revealed that pharmacists' counseling T2DM patients resulted in a significant effect on reducing the level of both blood sugar and glycosylated hemoglobin (HbA1c). It was revealed that pharmacists had a vital role in the management and control of the blood sugar of T2DM patients by counseling them. Such controlling of blood sugar contributed to better diabetes care and considerably reduced direct medical costs associated with the condition [6]. These findings are in agreement with the current study results, as the studies conducted on T2DM patients reported significant improvement in blood sugar level, HbA1c, and FBG after counseling. In addition, the reduction of FBG and glycosylated hemoglobin were reduced by more than twofold and almost tenfold, respectively. A systematic review by Iqbal et al. [28] revealed that pharmacist-led

interventions among diabetic patients significantly improved the outcomes of the patients and the complications of the disease [28]. A systematic review and meta-analysis identified the impact of pharmacists-led intervention for adults with T2DM and revealed that the intervention significantly improved HbA1c for T2DM patients [36], and this is in agreement with the current findings.

Another systematic review enrolled hypertensive patients and included 20 studies that found that counseling resulted in a favorable impact on the prevention and reduction of complications. In addition, the knowledge of patients regarding hypertension and self-efficacy was improved. Furthermore, adherence to counseling and consultation medication assisted in sustaining the BP of the patients within the normal range. Hence, counseling of hypertensive patients had a positive effect on the patients [1]. Similarly, it was found that counseling hypertensive patients by pharmacists resulted in significant improvement in BP by controlling and significant reduction of SBP and DBP. Also, the counseled patients reported improvement in knowledge and medication adherence.

In a meta-analysis that assessed the impact of pharmacist interventions on BP, it was found that pharmacist interventions resulted in a greater reduction in SBP and DBP. In addition, it was found that the impact tended to be greater if the intervention was led by the pharmacist and was done at least monthly [37]. These findings were in line with the current study findings, as it was found that both SBP and DBP were significantly reduced after counseling among hypertensive patients.

Conclusion

Counseling patients with diabetes and hypertension by pharmacists resulted in improving the outcomes of diabetes and hypertension, which represented improvements in glycosylated hemoglobin, fasting blood sugar, BP, and SBP and DBP reduction. In addition, counseling of patients with hypertension and/or diabetes resulted in improvement in BMI, lipid profile, adherence to medication, KAP, as well as HRQOL. Therefore, pharmacists have an important role in controlling diabetes mellitus and hypertension by counseling the patients, regardless of the counseling duration. In addition, counseling by pharmacists resulted in a wide range of positive outcomes that were not restricted to clinical outcomes only. Therefore, regardless of the type of condition of patients, pharmacists have a significant role in controlling and managing diabetes and hypertension.

List of Abbreviations

BGL Blood glucose level BMI Body mass index
DBP Diastolic blood pressure FBG Fasting blood glucose
FPBG Fasting plasma blood glucose HDL High-density lipoprotein HRQOL Health related quality of life
KAP Knowledge, attitude, and practice LDL low-density lipoprotein
QOL Quality of life
SBP Systolic blood pressure TC Total cholesterol
T2DM Type 2 diabetes mellitus TG Triglycerides

Conflict of interest

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