My day with Oncology Pharmacy - Zimbabwe

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1. Introduction

In form of an ESOP survey in March and April 2022, professionals were asked about their working situation in preparation and/or delivering of read-to-use or oral cytotoxic drugs. All relevant daily working processes as activities in prescription and validation of cytotoxic drugs as also their clinical pharmaceutical support in patient care are addressed. This poster presents the country specific evaluation. . Pharmacists from non-specialist community pharmacies answered the questions. Their answers represent the actual situation in Zimbabwe in the general private retail pharmacies.

2. Material and method

The survey with 18 questions was translated into different languages and performed nationally using a web-based application. Survey was distributed via email to pharmacists and pharmacy technicians working in oncology pharmacy and aseptic services in Zimbabwe .

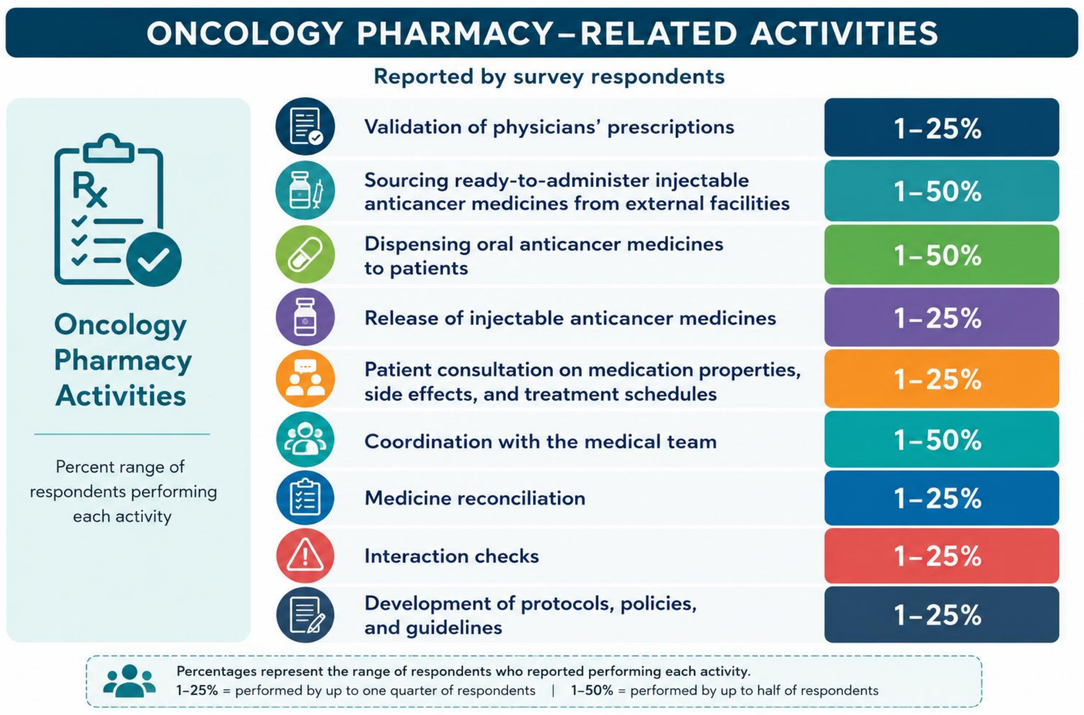

Fig.1: Pharmacy related activities in Zimbabwe

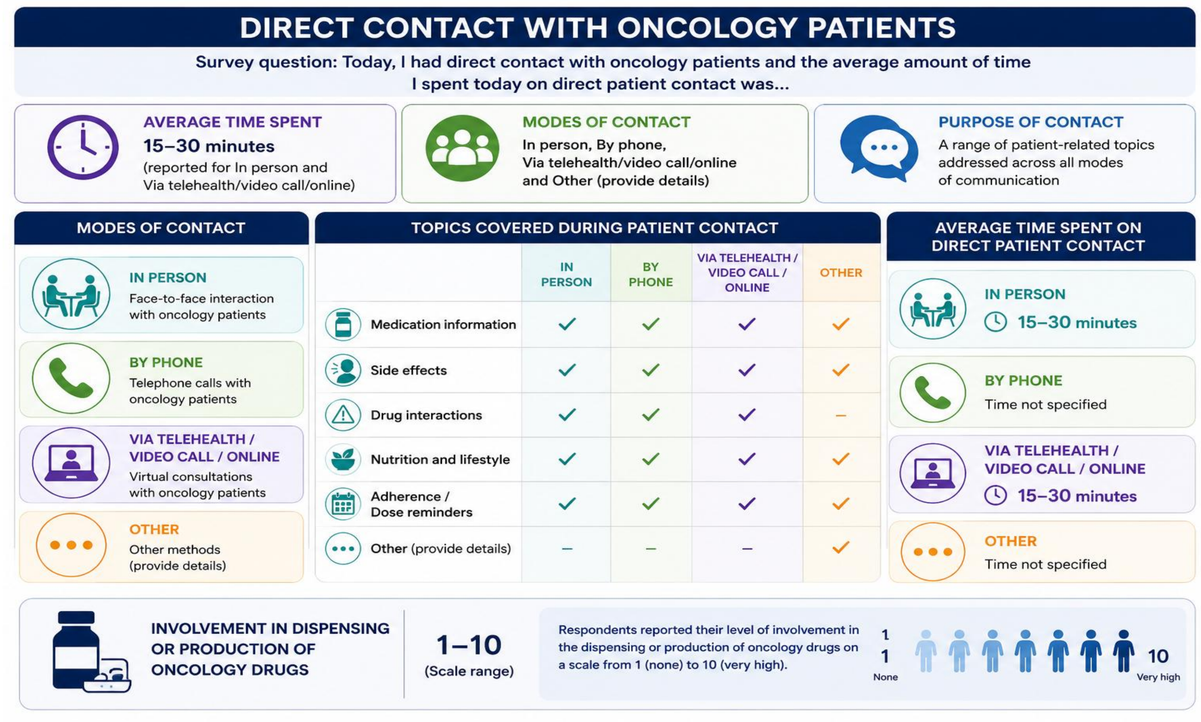

Fig.2: Pharmacy related activities in Zimbabwe

3. Results and discussion

All survey respondents worked in general community pharmacies, where pharmacists were responsible for validating prescriptions and dispensing all medications. Reported oncology pharmacy-related activities included validation of physicians' prescriptions (1–25%), sourcing ready-to-administer injectable anticancer medicines from external facilities (1–50%), dispensing oral anticancer medicines to patients (1–50%), release of injectable anticancer medicines (1–25%), patient consultation on medication properties, side effects, and treatment schedules (1–25%), coordination with the medical team (1–50%), medicine reconciliation (1–25%), interaction checks (1–25%), and development of protocols, policies, and guidelines (1–25%). Most respondents reported spending less than one hour on oncology pharmacy activities. These findings suggest that oncology pharmacy services within community pharmacy settings remain limited and are largely focused on basic dispensing and coordination activities. The minimal time dedicated to oncology-related responsibilities may reflect gaps in workforce capacity, specialized training, and integration of oncology pharmacy services into routine pharmaceutical care.

Fig.3: Pharmacist in Zimbabwe checking expiry dates of oncology medicines

Fig.4: Community Pharmacy set up for client interaction

Conclusion

Oncology pharmacists play a crucial role in maintaining medication safety and efficacy. In Zimbabwe, community pharmacy practices highlight a growing field of oncology pharmacy. More pharmacists seek skills in clinical care, safe handling of oncology medicines, and multidisciplinary work. Training needs span basic to advanced levels via national programs, CPD, and masterclasses.

Contact

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