Patient Attitudes toward Point-of-Care Medication Dispensing in a Primary Care Office Setting

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The practice of filling prescriptions in the primary care office is not new, but recent advances in technology, changes in reimbursement rates and the emergence of patient-centered medicine are each helping to fuel resurgence in point of care dispensing. This study was designed to measure patient attitudes toward the concept of in-office (point-of-care) medication dispensing.

Methods: A telephone survey conducted among a national probability sample of 1,023 adults comprising 510 men and 513 women 18 years of age and older, living in private households in the continental United States. Interviewing was completed during the period July 19-22, 2007 by Opinion Research Corporation on behalf of Purkinje, a health care technology company.

Results: Among respondents, 75% said they would elect to have their prescription filled in their doctor's office instead of a pharmacy if given the choice. A majority of respondents (84%) said such a service would be more convenient, and 62% said it would help them better manage their health.

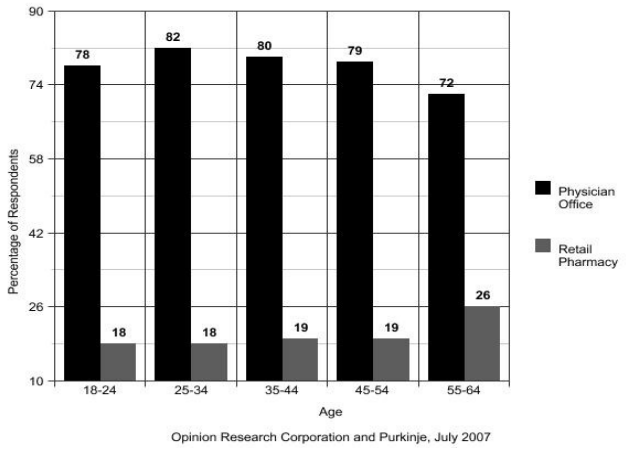
Conclusions: Physicians are missing an opportunity to improve patient satisfaction and enhance revenue by not dispensing medicine in their office.

Patients to Doctors: 'Save Me a Trip to the Pharmacy'

Most Americans Would Prefer to Receive Medications Directly From their Physicians

Three out of four Americans would have their prescription filled in their doctor's office instead of a pharmacy if given the choice, a new study finds, suggesting physicians are missing an opportunity to improve patient satisfaction and enhance revenue by not dispensing medicine in their office.

Table 1. *If given the choice between filling your prescription at the pharmacy and having it filled in your doctor's office, which would you most often choose?*



The nationwide research examined consumer attitudes of an FDA-approved service known as in-office medication or point of care dispensing. The practice involves distributing pre-packaged medications directly to patients at the point of care, saving them a trip to the pharmacy and allowing them to immediately begin their treatment.

Overall preference for office-based medication dispensing appears to be driven by the prospect of saving time and improving quality of care. A majority of respondents (84%) said such a service would be more convenient, and 62% said it would help them better manage their health.

Other highlights:

- Households with children (83%) and respondents age 25-44 (82%) were most likely to have their prescriptions filled in a physician's office if given the choice. There were no apparent attitude differences according to household income or geographic location.

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- Respondents with an annual household income of less than $25,000 (77%) and those age 25-34 (72%) were most likely to agree that in-office medication dispensing would help them better manage their own health.

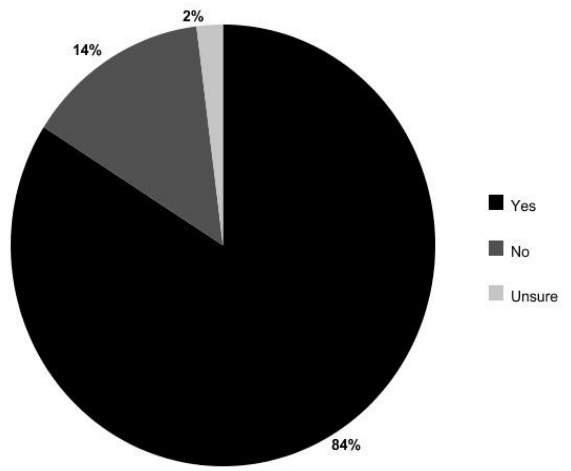
- In general, there were no attitude differences according to the gender, household income, level of education, or geographic location of respondents.

"Thousands of progressive medical and dental offices around the nation are adding medication dispensing as a way to heighten the patient experience and create a new source of revenue," said Tom Doerr, M.D., Chief Medical Officer for Purkinje and a practicing physician. "Patients like the comfort of having their prescription filled in the privacy of their physician's office, and the convenience of starting their treatment right away." The practice of filling prescriptions in the doctors office is not new, but recent advances in technology, changes in reimbursement rates and the emergence of patient-centered medicine are each helping to fuel resurgence in point of care dispensing.

Sophisticated software programs, for example, double check to ensure patients are receiving the right medicine, cross-check against known allergies and look for potentially adverse interactions. Medications arrive in safety-sealed bottles, prepackaged offsite under the supervision of a licensed pharmacist. Colorful labels explain how and when to take the medicine.

"More and more, physicians are recognizing that filling prescriptions at the point of care isn't just good medicine, but that it also improves customer service and reassures patients," Doerr said.

Table 2. *Would an in-office medication dispensing service be more convenient for you or your family?*



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Request a complete copy of the research findings or learn more about in-office medication dispensing.

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