







## Original Research

# Community Pharmacy Services, Pharmacy Attendance and patients' Satisfaction in the Southern Region of Jordan: A Community-Based study

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### Abstract

**Background:** Patient satisfaction is a vital parameter that helps the decision makers to assess the quality of provided health care services and identifying the different factors that are responsible for sustainability of these services. **Objectives:** This study aimed to identify the reasons for community pharmacy attendance, evaluate patients' satisfaction regarding pharmaceutical services provided by community pharmacies in the southern cities of Jordan and identify the factors that affect the satisfaction. **Material and method:** A cross-sectional survey was conducted for 3 months. The participants (n=1000) were picked randomly from patients who were more than 18 years old and attended the randomly selected community pharmacies (n=40) in the southern cities of Jordan. Data were analyzed using SPSS, version 20.0. Patients' satisfaction was measured using a three-point Likert scale. An independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to assess the impact of demographic factors on the degree of satisfaction. The statistical significance was considered at  $p < 0.05$ . **Results:** A total of 1000 patients participated in this study. The majority of respondents (68.3%) were female. Approximately half of the respondents 48.2% reported that they are fairly healthy. Respondents attended a pharmacy for purchasing prescribed medications (70.7%) and they showed hesitation in receiving new services such as a smoking cessation program (5.1%). Patients in the southern cities of Jordan showed a moderate level of satisfaction regarding overall provided services with a mean score (2.23 out of 3), which is equal to 74.3%. The patients were dissatisfied with the lack of patient privacy with a mean score (1.32 out of 3) and the educational level of the pharmacy staff with a mean score (1.52 out of 3). **Conclusion:** In South Jordan, patients attended community pharmacies to receive traditional services and they hesitated to receive new services. Patients were moderately satisfied with community pharmacy services, and they expected much from pharmacists. Demographic characteristics were not the factors that affected patients' satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Community Pharmacy, Satisfaction, Pharmaceutical Services, South Jordan

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## INTRODUCTION

Community pharmacy services have increasingly changed. Along with technological advancement, an increase in the prevalence of chronic diseases and the shortage of health care providers, the role of community pharmacists has recently expanded beyond traditional drug dispensing to include patient-centered services such as drug counseling, drug monitoring, lifestyle modification, wound dressing, smoking cessation, and weight management programs.<sup>1-3</sup>

Community pharmacists are the primary professional suppliers of medical information and the most accessible healthcare service providers.<sup>4,5</sup> The managerial challenge that pharmacists must deal with is maintaining patient's satisfaction while providing these services. Patient's satisfaction represents an essential and integral tool that is used for measuring the quality of provided services and identifying the different factors that help in the implementation, improvement and sustainability of these services.<sup>3,6</sup>

There are several factors associated with the level of patient's satisfaction with pharmacy services including patient demographics, health status, healthcare providers' characteristics and patients' needs and expectations.<sup>3,7</sup> Highly satisfied patients showed improved compliance, medication



adherence, better clinical outcomes, higher quality of life, fewer health complications, and fewer hospitalizations due to their chronic diseases.<sup>8,9</sup>

Recently in Jordan, community pharmacists spend most of their time dispensing and counseling and delivering numerous services such as medication review, smoking cessation program, nutrition, diabetes screening and measuring of blood pressure.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, it is of utmost importance to assess the level of patient's satisfaction regarding these services. In Jordan, there were limited studies conducted to evaluate public satisfaction with pharmaceutical services. In a previous study, Mukattash and his colleagues looked at public satisfaction with the current function of community pharmacists.<sup>11</sup> In a different study, Basheti et al. examined patient satisfaction with medication management review services.<sup>12</sup> To our knowledge, none of them paid particular attention to the southern cities of Jordan, and the findings of these studies cannot be generalized to these cities because the habits, traditions and cultures of these southern cities relatively differ from those of other Jordanian cities.

This is the first study in the field of evaluation of pharmaceutical services in the southern cities of Jordan, which examined patients' satisfaction with the pharmacy's location, design and staff, medication handling, dispensing, and counseling procedures. This study shed light on the challenges and proposed strategies to improve the community pharmacy's services and patients' experience which constitutes the novelty of the current study. The objectives of this study were to identify the reasons for community pharmacy attendance, assess the patients' satisfaction regarding the current pharmaceutical services provided by community pharmacies in the south of Jordan and assess the relationship between patients' demographic characteristics and the level of satisfaction.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This community-based, descriptive, cross-sectional survey was conducted to determine the extent of patients' satisfaction with the provided pharmaceutical care services in southern cities of Jordan. The target sample size of this study was 1,000. In earlier surveys, it has been demonstrated that this sample size yields statistically reliable findings.<sup>6,11</sup>

A random sample of community pharmacy visiting patients was recruited in this study that consisted of adult patients older than 18 who were able to read and comprehend the survey form. Forty community pharmacies in the southern cities of Jordan (Al-Karak, Al-Tafila, Maan and Al-Aqaba) were randomly chosen (10 pharmacies for each city). Participating pharmacies were randomly selected from a list obtained from the Jordanian Pharmacists Association (for every two pharmacies, the third was selected). These pharmacies agreed for research participation with limitless organizational possibilities.

The survey participants (1,000) were picked randomly from the patients who attended the chosen pharmacies between October 2022 and December 2022 (One from every four

patients who entered the pharmacy was chosen). The target sample was 25 patients per pharmacy, and both urban and rural areas of these sites were used for recruitment.

The participants were informed verbally about the nature and purpose of the study by well-trained pharmacists who represented themselves as co-researchers. The participants were cordially asked to fill out a questionnaire within the selected pharmacies, and they were informed that participation was entirely voluntary and anonymous. Patients who were illiterate or had low educational levels received additional assistance to complete the questionnaire. The Deanship of Scientific Research and Innovation at Al-Balqa Applied University gave its approval to this study (REF: 26/3/2/213).

## Questionnaire

The questionnaire was created by the research team and then introduced for evaluation by experts in the pharmaceutical care field. To receive feedback about the readability and simplicity of questionnaire items, the draft was piloted on a convenient sample (n=50) of respondents. All notes and suggestions were taken into consideration to build the final version of the questionnaire. The results from the piloted sample were excluded from the study's final statistical analysis. All questionnaire items' reliability was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha, which was greater than 0.73, and the validity was ensured because Pearson's r ranged from 0.38 to 0.80 for each item-

The study included a questionnaire with 37 items divided into three main domains. Domain A asked closed-ended questions about the characteristics of the participants (gender, city, education levels, monthly income, health status, and frequency of pharmacy visits); Domain B asked questions about the reasons for attending the pharmacy (from which respondents could select one or more); and Domain C asked three-point Likert-type questions about the level of patient's satisfaction with the community pharmacy provided services (satisfied, not satisfied nor dissatisfied and dissatisfied ).

The questionnaire responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS software version 20. To represent characteristics and responses accurately, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and P-value) were calculated. Statistical significance was attained when  $p \leq 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

### Characteristics of respondents:

In this study, 1,000 respondents in total were interviewed. A total of 68.3% participants were female and the majority of respondents (65%) held a university degree. More than half of respondents (58.9%) visited a pharmacy less than 5 times during the last three months and slightly half of them reported that they are fairly healthy. The sociodemographic details of the respondents are displayed in Table 1



Variable	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	317	31.7
Female	683	68.3
City		
Maan	250	25
Al-Karak	250	25
Al-Tafila	250	25
Al-Aqaba	250	25
Educational Status		
Secondary School or below	232	23.2
University degree (Bachelor's or Diploma)	650	65
Post-graduation	118	11.8
Monthly Income (Jordanian Dinar)		
Less than 300	347	34.7
From 300-600	485	48.5
From 600-1000	118	11.8
More than 1000	50	5
Health Status		
Healthy	234	23.4
Fairly Healthy	482	48.2
Unhealthy	284	28.4
Number of Pharmacy Visits (During Last Three Months)		
Less Than 5 Visits	589	58.9
From 5 to 10 Visits	312	31.2
More than 10 Visits	99	9.9

### Pharmacy Attendance:

According to Table 2, purchasing prescribed medications was the most common pharmaceutical service used by the respondents (70.7%) and a low percentage of respondents attended community pharmacy to receive newly provided services such as smoking cessation program. Further details are shown in Table 2.

### Level of Satisfaction:

Patients' satisfaction with community pharmacy services was measured using a three-point Likert scale, which is statistically expressed by the mean of respondents' answers frequencies (out of three), and standard deviation. Calculated scores were condensed into three satisfaction levels. (Low satisfaction: range of scores 1–1.66, moderate satisfaction: range of scores 1.67–2.33, high satisfaction: range of scores 2.34–3)

The satisfaction was measured using 19 items through three sub-scales: 1-satisfaction with pharmacy location, design and staff, 2- satisfaction with medication handling, 3- satisfaction with dispensing and counseling practices. The mean overall satisfaction score for participants was 2.23 (SD:0.56) out of 3 (maximum possible score), which is equal to 74.3%, reflecting a moderate level of satisfaction with provided services. The results are shown in Table 3.

### Satisfaction with pharmacy location, design, and staff:

It was stunning to find that patients were highly satisfied with the pharmacist's behavior with a score of 2.85 out of

Services	Number	Percentage
Purchasing prescribed medications	707	70.7
Purchasing over-the-counter drugs (OTC)	459	45.9
Purchasing items other than drugs (cosmetics, supplements, baby products)	232	23.2
Pharmacist counseling on minor conditions	443	44.3
Medication review and pharmacist assistance with medication use	422	42.2
Pharmacist counseling and regular follow-up on a chronic disease	173	17.3
Measuring blood pressure	128	12.8
Measuring blood sugar level	108	10.8
Helping in weight management	94	9.4
Helping with smoking cessation	51	5.1
Using Herbal medicine	148	14.8
How to use inhalers	66	6.6

Domain	Mean (out of 3)	Standard deviation
Pharmacy location, design, and staff		
I am satisfied with the easiness of access to the pharmacy location	2.42	0.66
I am satisfied that parking facilities are available	2.22	0.64
I am satisfied with receiving services during weekends, holidays and the emergency cases	2.74	0.62
I am satisfied with the adequate number of pharmacists and immediate getting services	2.51	0.59
I am satisfied that the pharmacy has a comfortable counseling place	1.39	0.76
I am satisfied that the pharmacy staff are well-educated	1.52	0.54
I am satisfied that the pharmacist behaves courteously.	2.85	0.51
I am satisfied with the availability of self-service for handling some products	2.28	0.71
I am satisfied with the delivery options	2.04	0.77
Medication handling		
The pharmacist dispenses the medication exactly as prescribed by the doctor	2.54	0.51
Availability of different medications and medical appliances	2.42	0.54
Medications are stored appropriately and safely according to manufacturer instructions	2.77	0.45
Dispensing and counseling practices		
I am satisfied with the counseling time	2.78	0.51
I am satisfied with the pharmacist's and doctor's cooperation when it is required.	2.23	0.69
I am satisfied that the instructions are obviously labeled on the medications	2.6	0.58

I am satisfied that the pharmacist maintains privacy while dispensing and counseling	1.32	0.62
I am satisfied that instructions and advice are provided by the pharmacist without request	2.28	0.65
I am satisfied that the pharmacist listens and answers my questions politely using simple language that I can understand	2.62	0.54
I am satisfied that the pharmacist explains the treatment period, the guidance on medication storage and its expiry after opening	2.45	0.67
Overall satisfaction		
Overall satisfaction with services provided by community pharmacy	2.23	0.56

3. However, participants' satisfaction with the educational background of pharmacy staff was low with a score of 1.52 out of 3. Further details are shown in Table 3.

Satisfaction with medication handling:

Participants showed a high level of satisfaction regarding medication handling with a mean score of more than 2.34 out of 3 for each item. Details are shown in Table 3.

Satisfaction with dispensing and counseling practices:

Patients' satisfaction with the dispensing and counseling practices score was measured using 7 items. The respondents were highly satisfied with counseling time with a score of 2.78

out of 3, while they appeared to be dissatisfied with the lack of patient privacy during dispensing and counseling (1.32/3). Further results are shown in Table 3.

Patient's characteristics and satisfaction level:

As shown in Table 4 and Table 5, an independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to assess the impact of demographic factors on the degree of satisfaction. The findings of these tests showed that the satisfaction levels of patients are not significantly different based on their demographic characteristics. P-value <0.05.

DISCUSSION

In the current study, most of the respondents attend community pharmacies for drug dispensing or drug counseling on minor conditions, but they are still unwilling to have pharmacists' consultations on issues related to their chronic diseases. This finding was in agreement with a recent study carried out in England as well as with a study conducted in Slovakia.<sup>13,14</sup> The explanation includes: the close relationship between patients with chronic diseases with their doctors, the fact that community pharmacists in Jordan do not have access to their patients' electronic medical records and many community pharmacists are not familiar with the most recent guidelines for treating chronic diseases. This highlights the necessity to improve the pharmacist's image and create a long-lasting

Table 4. Patients' gender and the level of satisfaction (result of t-test)					
Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T- value	P-value
Male	317	2.42	0.39	0.573	0.133
Female	683	2.44	0.35		

Table 5. Patients' characteristics and the level of satisfaction (result of one-way ANOVA)						
Variable	Number	Mean	Sum Square	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
City					0.094	0.124
Maan	250	2.47	0.562	0.281		
Al-Karak	250	2.44	66.671	0.323		
Al-Tafila	250	2.42	67.233			
Al- Aqaba	250	2.40	64.678			
Monthly Income (Jordanian Dinar)					1.314	0.269
Less than 300	347	2.42	0.53	0.177		
From 300-600	485	2.46	66.703	0.234		
From 600-1000	118	2.36	67.233	0.177		
More than 1000	50	2.47				
Educational Status					0.256	0.774
Secondary School or below	232	2.46	0.069			
University degree (Bachelor's/Diploma)	650	2.43	67.164	0.035		
Post-graduation	118	2.44	67.233	0.135		
Health Status					0.898	0.743
Healthy	234	2.44	0.393	0.109		
Fairly Healthy	482	2.48	66.103	0.230		
Unhealthy	284	2.39	67.017			
Number of Pharmacy Visits (During Last Three Months)					0.351	0.704
Less than 5	579	2.42	0.095	0.047		
From 5-10	322	2.45	67.138	0.135		
More than 10	99	2.42	67.233			





relationship built on trust between the patient and pharmacist.

Patients in the south region of Jordan showed hesitation to receive the newly provided services, e.g. smoking cessation program, inhaler techniques and weight management and this is contrary to the finding of a previous study conducted in Malaysia.<sup>3</sup> This confirms the need to increase public awareness regarding the importance of the pharmacist's intervention in their health and to enhance the professional role of pharmacists in these cities.

The study's overall satisfaction rate was 74.3%, which indicates moderate satisfaction with community pharmacies' services. This finding was similar to satisfaction studies conducted in Slovakia (71.3%) and Spain (76%), respectively<sup>14,15</sup> and it is considered to be much higher than previous studies conducted in Pakistan (39.6%) and Portugal (39%) respectively.<sup>6,16</sup> The factors contributing to this disparity are that Jordan is considered as a regional leader in the field of healthcare,<sup>17</sup> and prospective candidates need to have a pharmacy degree from a university and complete 1440-hours training course before registering with Jordanian Pharmacists Association in order to work in a community pharmacy.

Like other studies' findings, it was not surprising that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the attitudes of pharmacy staff.<sup>18-20</sup> Patients also were satisfied with the availability of services all the time, the easiness of access to the pharmacy and drug handling.<sup>21,22</sup> In contrast with other study finding respondents were satisfied with the time they spend with the pharmacist, which enhances their drug adherence.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, they were satisfied with the pharmacist willingness to answer their questions, pharmacist follow-up and screening for drug interaction, and also they were satisfied with pharmacist's guidance for medication storage, treatment period and drug efficacy and safety after the opening.<sup>20,21</sup>

In consistency with studies, the absence of a specific counseling area in most community pharmacies and the lack of patients' privacy could lead to insufficient management therapy and negatively affects patients' satisfaction. In agreement with previous studies, patients were unsatisfied with the absence of a specific counseling area in most community pharmacies, which compromises their privacy and could lead to insufficient therapeutic management.<sup>19,23</sup> This finding highlights the necessity for new regulations that mandate the establishment of private counseling area in pharmacies to protect patients' privacy. Previous studies also showed that patients are not satisfied with the pharmacy staff's level of education and professional pharmaceutical skills.<sup>6,11</sup> This confirms the need for continuous-training as well as the development of residency programs to give essential training in clinical practice, especially for specific services offered by community pharmacies.

Regarding the variables that influence patient satisfaction,

it was reported in previous studies that gender, educational status, frequency of pharmacy visits, monthly income and health status were significantly associated with patient satisfaction. However, our study's finding contradicts these studies' finding.<sup>3, 6, 21</sup>

## LIMITATIONS

Although this study has several strengths, there were some limitations that could be overcome in future research. Our research looked at the effect of demographic characteristics on satisfaction; more factors should be included in future research. As patients were questioned about things that happened before answering the questionnaire, bias cannot be excluded. Some patients in rural areas of these cities were not aware of the new services offered by community pharmacies.

## CONCLUSION

In southern cities of Jordan, patients attended community pharmacies to receive traditional services and they hesitated to receive new services.

Patients were moderately satisfied with community pharmacy services, and they expected much from pharmacists. Demographic characteristics were not the factors that affect patient satisfaction. Authorities need to improve their current policies to change patients' perceptions of pharmacists as professional healthcare providers rather than just drug dispensers and develop a new image for community pharmacists. This research could serve as the cornerstone for other health-related studies to be conducted in the south of Jordan.

**CONSENT:** I have read and agree to the privacy policy

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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**AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION:** Esraa Mahmoud Gogazeh- design the study structure, write, review the final draft and supervision; Ola Bdair - analysis and interpretation of data; Izzeddin Bdair- writing- review and editing; Maysaa Alwadi- data analysis and supervision; Rawan Badaineh- original draft preparation and data curation; Fatima Al\_Tarawneh- Methodology and supervision.

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