

Efficiency for the implantation Wasfaty prescription programme from the patient's perspective: A focus-group study

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ABSTRACT

Wasfaty prescription program is an e-prescribing solution applied to the most of the pharmacies in Saudi Arabi that is intended to allow physicians at government primary healthcare centers and hospitals to electronically prescribe rather than written prescription in order to allow patients to be able to pick up their prescriptions at both private and public pharmacies in Saudi Arabia. In this study, eight patients were involved to understand their perspectives on the program based on their experiences with this program. The discussion was facilitated by a trained moderator from which the discussion was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. The main result from the group study was the patients' experience with counseling, convenience, and reliability. The results asserted that the Wasfaty prescription program is efficient enough to address the clinical and health concerns of the population as a whole and it can be more reliable in comparison to the written prescription.

Keywords: Wasfaty, Prescription, Implantation, NUPCO, E-Health

Introduction

Wasfaty is one of the services of the National Company for the Unified Purchase of Medicines, Medical Devices, and Supplies "NUPCO" in cooperation with the Ministry of Health in Saudi Arabia. The program links primary care in health centers and hospitals with private pharmacies to improve healthcare in Saudi Arabia by making drugs easier to get. The Wasfaty program aims to provide the highest-quality electronic systems for drug dispensing, improve and enhance drug use guidelines, and ensure that patients across the country have access to medicines [1]. The program also aims to improve healthcare spending efficiency, eliminate waste, and prevent handwriting-related medical errors

[2]. Wasfaty is crucial to improving healthcare in the country. The program improves patients' quality of life and achieves Vision 2030 by making drugs easily accessible and available across Saudi Arabia. This study examines how the Wasfaty program improves healthcare in Saudi Arabia. The study examines the program's effects on medicine dispensing, patient satisfaction, and healthcare spending efficiency. This study will help improve the Wasfaty program by revealing its efficacy.

Materials and Methods

Sample size

The focus group study involved gathering Wasfaty program opinions from eight Saudi Arabia residents who were eligible for government health care. Through this small size, the sample opinions obtained were used as a representative of the entire population. The obtained insights were used to predict the program's effectiveness in the whole country.

Study design and setting

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A qualitative study design was used in collecting the data opinions representation. The study involved collecting opinions from the eight study participants. The focus group discussions were held in different rooms to ensure confidentiality and open discussions were calling for genuine responses. The workshop was guided by a qualified facilitator who posed questions and encouraged participants to discuss the Wasfaty program. Before the onset of the process, the participants signed consent forms and were informed of the goals of the study. The facilitator then presented the Wasfaty program and briefly described its goals and offerings. The participants were encouraged to ask any concerned questions and they were cleared.

Data collection

The data collected from the focus group discussion was audio recorded, and notes were gathered with the participants' consent. Breaks were allowed during the 60-minute debate to allow for refreshing before resumption. The data was put together and analyzed.

Data analysis

The participants' replies were evaluated using thematic analysis to find common themes and subthemes. Thematic analysis is in the appendix section. All ethical factors were taken into account during the investigation, which was authorized by the relevant health authority's institutional review board (IRB).

Results and Discussion

Eight people participated in the focus group discussion about Wasfaty's prescription program efficiency. The participants were four men and four women aged 25–55. The main subject was convenience, with patients emphasizing the advantages of skipping pharmacy lines and the existence of cooperative pharmacies in each area. Participants also reported satisfaction with the availability of medications around-the-clock. Nonetheless, several patients expressed dissatisfaction with the dispensing time, citing the possibility of delays in private pharmacies due to crowding. The patients established that the program was very convenient in terms of the turnaround time and medication pick-up. The dispensing process hours were of high concern however with some patients expressing their dissatisfaction with delays [3]. This indicates that the program's efficiency in the dispensing process may not turn out optimal to the patient's preferences.

Another significant issue that emerged was counseling. Participants expressed doubts about the effectiveness of pharmacists' counseling since they may be too preoccupied with selling other products [4]. As a result, patients suffered from inadequate counseling and unfavorable experiences. Regarding cost-effectiveness, patients voiced concerns about how the Wasfaty prescription program would affect their spending patterns because it would result in higher drug costs. It is a crucial necessity to provide patients with adequate counseling before

handing over their prescriptions to ensure they have the necessary and accurate information about their medication including dosage, side effects, and potential drug interactions [1]. This is a necessary aspect for patients with chronic conditions who may highly require ongoing medication management [5]. Another topic was reliability, with participants voicing worries about reliance on the system. They pointed out that, in contrast to the conventional method of drug dispensation from the primary care pharmacist, patients may not be able to obtain their medication in the event of a system flaw or hack [6]. Patients also talked about the automatic prescription renewal option, which has both advantages and disadvantages. Reliability forms one of the crucial aspects of the program as it aims to provide patients with reliable ways of accessing medications [7]. If the program fails to address this then there is the need for adequate adjustments to meet patients requirements and needs.

Thematic analysis summary

The thematic analysis of the patient opinions on the efficiency of the implantation Wasfaty prescription program revealed several themes and subthemes. The convenience theme included four subthemes, with patients positively discussing the time-saving benefit of avoiding the pharmacy window and the availability of collaborative pharmacies in each suburb, as well as the 24-hour access to medication. However, patients also expressed negative opinions about the dispensing time, as private pharmacies may be crowded, leading to delays.

The counseling theme highlighted the inadequacy of counseling from pharmacists, as they may be too busy selling other products, leading to insufficient counseling and negative patient experiences [4]. In terms of cost-effectiveness, patients expressed concerns about the impact of the Wasfaty prescription program on their spending habits, as it may lead to increased spending on medication [8].

Regarding reliability, patients expressed concerns about dependence on the system, as the dispensing cannot be proceeded in case of a system defect or hack compared to the traditional way of dispensing from the primary care pharmacist [9]. Furthermore, patients discussed the automatic prescription renewal feature, which can have pros and cons at the same time [10]. While some patients appreciated the convenience of automatic renewal, others expressed concerns about the potential risks associated with renewing prescriptions without physician oversight. These mixed opinions suggest that there may be a need for more education and information about the benefits and risks of automatic prescription renewal.

The patient opinions on the implantation Wasfaty prescription program were mixed, with some positive opinions regarding convenience, availability, and automatic prescription renewal and negative opinions regarding dispensing time, counseling, cost-effectiveness, and system dependence. These data imply that there are still areas of improvement for the program. Fixing these negative issues will ensure the program's efficacy and patient accessibility.

Conclusion

The Wasfaty program has made a considerable improvement to the standard of healthcare in Saudi Arabia. By connecting primary care centers with independent pharmacies, the program has made medication accessible to access for patients. By the use of electronic prescriptions, the program has also reduced medical errors brought on by illegible handwriting and increased patient safety.

The results of our study indicate that patients who have used the Wasfaty program have been pleased with it. The program's advantages include the thorough coverage of medical institutions it offers, the accessibility of pharmaceuticals across the country, and the simplicity of the electronic system. The cost-effectiveness of the program and the hazards of system failure or hacking are two limitations that must yet be addressed.

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