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## Pharmacists Reduce Hospitalizations, Length of Stay for Dialysis Patients, Study Finds

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Patients with end-stage renal disease who received in-depth medication reviews by clinical pharmacists had 42% fewer hospitalizations and a 21% decline in length of hospital stay, according to a study in the December 2009 *Pharmacotherapy*.<sup>1</sup>

Pharmacists identified 530 drug-related problems among 57 patients while reviewing patients' medications every three weeks during the two-year pilot study at a dialysis clinic in New Mexico. The pharmacists also joined weekly patient rounds and monthly patient reviews with the patients' health care team. One of the pharmacists was a nephrology-trained clinical pharmacist, while the other two were completing nephrology pharmacotherapy postdoctoral training.

The 47 patients in the control group received "periodic drug profile updates by dialysis nursing staff," which is standard care.

"This demonstrates that consistent care by a nephrology-trained clinical pharmacist can translate into cost avoidance for third-party payers (e.g., Medicare) and improved financial profiles for ambulatory hemodialysis centers that avoid lost revenue secondary to missed treatments while the patient is hospitalized," the study's authors stated.

As a result of these findings, the study's authors suggest health care policy makers consider adding pharmacists to a multidisciplinary care team for hemodialysis patients.

An abstract of the article is available at <http://www.atypon-link.com/PPI/doi/abs/10.1592/phco.29.12.1433>

1. Pai A B, Boyd A, Depczynski J et al. Reduced drug use and hospitalization rates in patients undergoing hemodialysis who received pharmaceutical care: a 2-year, randomized, controlled study. *Pharmacotherapy*. 2009; 1433-40.

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ASHP Health Policy Alerts are synopses of new studies highlighting the medication-use process in health care, especially studies assessing contemporary pharmacists' role in improving medication-use outcomes. The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists encourages recipients to keep a copy of this synopsis for future reference.



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