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## Pharmacist-physician collaboration reduces heart failure hospitalization rate, study finds

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Pharmacists performing medication reviews for Australian veterans ages 65 and older with heart failure reduced hospitalization rates by an adjusted 45%, according to a September 2009 study in the American Heart Association journal, *Circulation: Heart Failure*.<sup>1</sup>

The study found that 5.5% of the patients receiving a pharmacist medication review were hospitalized within a year, compared to 12% of patients who did not receive a medication review.

The study examined patients from January 1, 2004, to July 1, 2006, who were prescribed bisoprolol, carvedilol, or metoprolol succinate for heart failure. During the study period, 273 patients received a physician-referred medication review and 5,444 patients did not. Patients who received a medication review "had more comorbidities, more prescriptions dispensed, more changes to their medicines before the review, and more prior hospitalizations," the study found. Physicians then used the pharmacist's report when following-up with patients.

Only accredited pharmacists who have shown "competence in clinical pharmacy, therapeutics, pharmaceutical care, and medication review" were allowed to perform medication reviews, according to the study.

An abstract of the study is available at  
<http://circheartfailure.ahajournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/2/5/424>

1. Roughead EE, Barratt JD, Ramsay E et al. The effectiveness of collaborative medicine reviews in delaying time to next hospitalization for patients with heart failure in the practice setting. Results of a cohort study. *Circ Heart Fail*. 2009; 2:424-8.

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Questions about ASHP Health Policy Alerts can be directed to Lisa Daigle, policy analyst, at (301) 664-8651 or [ldaigle@ashp.org](mailto:ldaigle@ashp.org).

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.

