

December 9, 2011

Oncology Pharmacist Finds Adverse Events, Cuts Costs

A clinical oncology pharmacist examining patients' medications and consulting with patients in a community oncology clinic documented 131 adverse events and prevented \$210,000 in patient charges, according to a study in the December 2011 *Journal of Oncology Pharmacy Practice*.¹

The clinical pharmacist prevented patient charges "by preventing drug waste, reducing chemotherapy dosages when indicated, and rounding to the nearest vial size where appropriate." The study analyzed clinical interventions from September 4, 2004, to October 27, 2006.

Patients saw the clinical pharmacist an average of 2.9 times during treatment. The pharmacist provided patient-specific treatment information and monitored patients for adverse events.

Positive comments about the pharmacist's services from oncology certified nurses and patients resulted in the clinic hiring a full-time pharmacy technician to allow the pharmacist more time to interact with patients.

An abstract of the study can be found at <http://opp.sagepub.com/content/17/4/387.abstract>.

1. Ruder AD, Smith DL, Madsen MT et al. Is there a benefit to having a clinical oncology pharmacist on staff at a community oncology clinic? *J Oncol Pharm Practice*. 2011; 17:425-32.

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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.

