

### Clinical Pharmacist Interventions Reduced, Avoided Expenditures, Review of 21 Studies Shows

Clinical pharmacists' interventions in hospital inpatient settings to improve patient outcomes reduced and avoided expenditures, according to a June 15, 2008, review article in the American Journal of Health-System Pharmacy.

In a review of 21 studies published between 1996 and 2007, clinical pharmacists' fiscal value became apparent as they engaged in cost-saving interventions such as discontinuing unnecessary drugs and switching patients to a less expensive agent. Review authors also found that drug costs were reduced when pharmacists participated in rounds as part of a health care team. During rounds, pharmacists "gathered patient information, evaluated patients' drug therapy, and made therapeutic recommendations."

Pharmacists also avoided costs by preventing adverse drug events and reduced costs by optimizing patients' antibiotic therapy. Other general clinical pharmacist interventions reduced costs, such as by reviewing patients' charts and drug profiles.

Cost savings among the studies reviewed ranged widely, from \$1,977 during a 24-week period (extrapolated to \$9,135 in savings a year) to \$251,764 over 22 days (extrapolated to \$4.3 million in savings a year). The savings ranged from \$12 to \$11,444 per day.

The authors recommended future clinical pharmacy economic studies have a comparative design, such as comparing the results before and after clinical pharmacy is introduced. Future studies also should include "the incremental cost-effectiveness or cost:benefit ratio of clinical pharmacy interventions from a societal perspective."

A copy of the full study is available at

[http://www.ashp.org/s\\_ashp/docs/files/advocacy/policy\\_alert/AJHP\\_Economic\\_Effects\\_6\\_15\\_08.pdf](http://www.ashp.org/s_ashp/docs/files/advocacy/policy_alert/AJHP_Economic_Effects_6_15_08.pdf)

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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.

