



ABSTRACTS: [VOLUME 1, SPECIAL ISSUE S1](#).

ABSTRACT

Public Views on the Role of Pharmacists in Smoking Cessation

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Smoking cessation is the key to reducing death cases resulting from health complications caused by smoking. Trying to discontinue smoking without external assistance, regardless of the smoking cessation method used, is proving to be difficult. Because of this, smokers often seek consultation from a health care provider to successfully quit smoking. Pharmacists can play a pivotal role in providing counseling services to smokers, enabling them to successfully quit. Accordingly, a study was carried out to assess the public view of the role of a pharmacist in smoking cessation in Palestine. The survey was constructed using Google Drive and was distributed to the public between December 2018 and February 2019 using social media (electronically) and printed forms (manually). The survey consisted of 26 questions divided into three sections namely demographics, public counseling preferences, and perceptions. Data were analyzed using a statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) in version 17. A total of 136 completed questionnaires were collected. Preliminary findings demonstrated that 14.7% of the respondents selected pharmacists as a choice for support in smoking cessation. However, only 16.2% of them selected pharmacists for general counseling and 35.3% selected pharmacists only if they seek pharmacological intervention. Public perception showed that 50% of respondents agreed that pharmacists are an integral part of the healthcare system like physicians. They trusted the pharmacist for the information about smoking cessation and felt that pharmacists were qualified health professionals that are able to provide assistance in smoking cessation. The public showed little interest in seeking smoking cessation counseling by pharmacists. This may be due to the fact that most Palestinian pharmacists have no pharmacological treatments that can help smokers to quit smoking. Increasing the effectiveness of the role of pharmacists in smoking cessation requires extra efforts from health policy makers and pharmacists.