Pharmacy Students, Faculty Teach Community About OTC Medications

College of Pharmacy
January 2012

They may be easily available to purchase, but over-the-counter medications can still be as hazardous as prescription drugs when they are misused.

One of the many community outreach activities performed by College of Pharmacy [1] faculty and students is educating people on how to safely take over-the-counter medications.

One project, led by clinical assistant professor Jeannie Lee [2], involves having pharmacy students visit senior centers to teach older adults about over-the-counter or nonprescription medications.

"It is vital that people understand that OTC medications, even though freely purchased without a prescription, are approved for using certain doses, for certain indications, for certain duration," Lee said. "Further and probably most importantly, OTC medications, including vitamins and herbal supplements, can and do cause side effects, and interact with each other, prescription drugs and health conditions."

Therefore, knowledge is power when it comes to using them safely, especially for people who take multiple medications, as many older adults do, she said.

In a video on the College of Pharmacy website [3], Lee and several doctoral students provide an interactive learning experience for a group of Tucson seniors.

"For pharmacy students, visiting senior centers is a great opportunity to apply what they have learned about OTC medications. They also learn to communicate with older adults who use many medications, including OTC products, and answer important questions for the patients," Lee said.

In senior centers, students have a captive audience with high interest in what the students know and have to say, she said.

It's "a win-win situation where patient-oriented students spread their service wings to benefit our older community," she said.

The program began in September 2010 as a student research project that got an overwhelmingly positive response. So far the program has reach more than 200 older adults in Tucson and Prescott.

Comments? Send them to lqp@email.arizona.edu [4]. Emails must be sent from UA or UA Foundation accounts. Please include your full name and title.

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/pharmacy-students-faculty-teach-community-about-otc-
Links
[4] mailto:lqp@email.arizona.edu