

**ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS'  
COUNSELING SKILLS ON SELLING ANTIBIOTICS  
IN CAN THO CITY, VIETNAM: A SIMULATED PATIENT STUDY**  
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## **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The wide and prolonged use and abuse of antibiotics in livestock and poultry farming, aquaculture, and farming to treat and prevent animal diseases, as well as production purposes, made microorganisms adapt to drugs, facilitate the resistance of many types of antibiotics, and decrease the effectiveness of medicines. **Objective:** To assess the counseling skills of community pharmacists for antibiotics by using the simulated patient approach. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted from June 2021 to June 2022. Data were obtained from a convenience sampling consisting of one pharmacist from each of the 24 participating community pharmacies. To evaluate the pharmacists' counseling skills, a simulated patient role played a standardized headache case requesting self-medication. The interactions of the simulated patient with the pharmacists were audiovisually recorded using a hidden micro-camera. These recordings were analyzed using a questionnaire designed based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization on the rational and safe use of drugs. **Results:** 100% of pharmacy retailers sold medicines at clients' request, 26.7% of the pharmacies and 15.8% of pharmacy counters selling antibiotics for more than 5 days. None of the visited pharmacies asked about past medical history or the history of allergic reactions. The most common advice was to change medicines/use others (n=22, 18.3%). Around 4.2% of pharmacy staff gave instructions for taking the right dose of antibiotics. No simulated patient received information on side effects. The number of pharmacists who gave instructions for the number of drugs used per day (n=40, p<0.05) and for a single dose (n=44, p<0.05) were fewer than the others. **Conclusion:** This study showed that the pharmacists' counseling skills, guidance provided by the pharmacists to the patient, and training courses for community pharmacists in Vietnam should be enhanced.

**Keywords:** Community Pharmacy Services; Professional Practice; Patient Simulation.