

Expectations and Needs of Women with Epilepsy: Community Pharmacist Assistance with Antiepileptic Drugs

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Introduction

- Women with epilepsy (WWE) face specific challenges with the antiepileptic drugs (AEDs) used to treat seizures.^{1,2,3}
- Drug interactions which decrease the effectiveness of oral contraceptives
- Changes in the pharmacokinetics of AEDs during pregnancy affecting safety & effectiveness
- Risk of osteoporosis
- Risk of teratogenicity
- Gender specific impact of specific adverse effects (alopecia, hirsutism, gingival hyperplasia, weight gain/loss)^{1,2}
- Multiple studies indicate a desire for more information about epilepsy and AEDs amongst WWE.^{3,4}
- Community pharmacists are accessible sources of information capable of addressing this information gap.

Objectives

The primary objective of this project was to understand the expectations and needs that WWE have of their community pharmacist with regards to AEDs.

Methodology

Study Design

- Qualitative methodology via
 - focus groups
 - one-on-one interviews
- Sessions were recorded, transcribed and analyzed

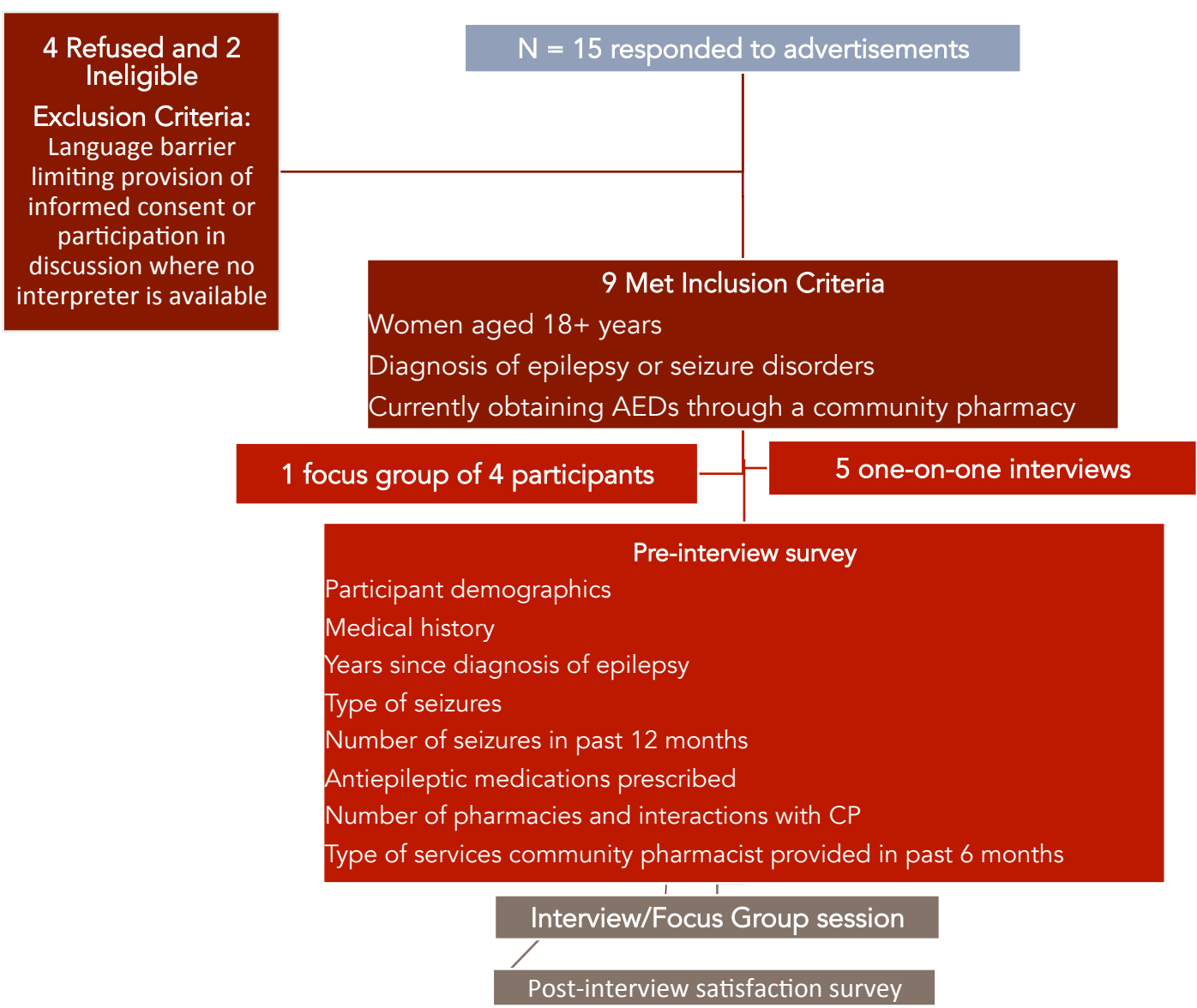
Sample Size

- Targeted enrollment of 4 - 6 members per focus group and 3 – 6 focus groups

Questions to assess following:

- Current knowledge on AEDs
- Satisfaction with CP
- Suggestions to improve experience of CP visit
- Specificity of information CP provides
- Information needs regarding AEDs and Natural Health Products (NHPs), vitamins and minerals
- Information needs regarding AEDs and pre-conception, pregnancy and breast feeding.
- Preferred mode and frequency of communication
- Expectations participants have of the CP

Figure 1: Methodology flowchart



Results

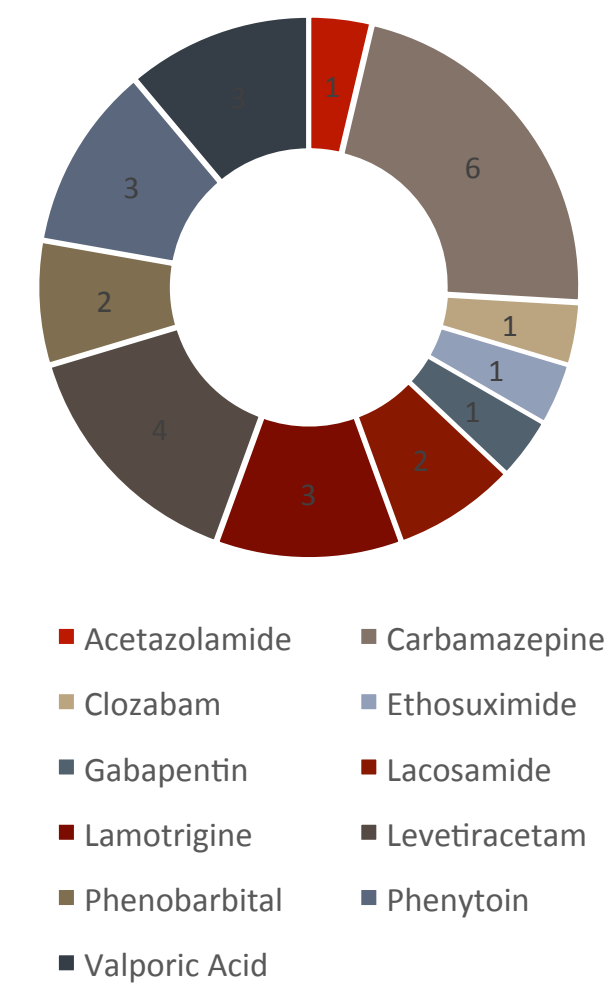
Demographics

Table 1: Participant information and epilepsy history.

Participant Information						
Age	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	≥ 60	
Number of Participants	2	5	2	0	0	
Marital Status	Single	Married/Common Law	Divorced/Separated	Widowed		
Number of Participants	2	6	1	0		
Number of Children	0	Currently Pregnant	1	2	3	≥ 4
Number of Participants	3	0	1	4	1	0
Duration of Epilepsy	< 1 Year	1-5 Years	≥ 6 Years			
Number of Participants	0	0	9			
Type of Seizures	SPS	CPS	GTC	Both SPS, CPS and GTC	JME	Unknown
Number of Participants	1	1	2	3	1	1
Number of Seizures in the Past 12 Months	0	< 5	6-12	13-24	≥ 25	
Number of Participants	6	1	1	1	0	
Number of current regular AEDs	0	1	2	≥ 3		
Number of Participants	0	6	2	1		
Number of Natural Health Products	0					
Number of Participants	9					

CPS: Complex Partial Seizures; GTC: Generalized Tonic-Clonic Seizures; JME: Juvenile Myoclonic Epilepsy; SPS: Simple Partial Seizures

Figure 2: Use of AEDs among participants



Community Pharmacist Activities

Figure 3: Number of interactions participants had with the community pharmacists.

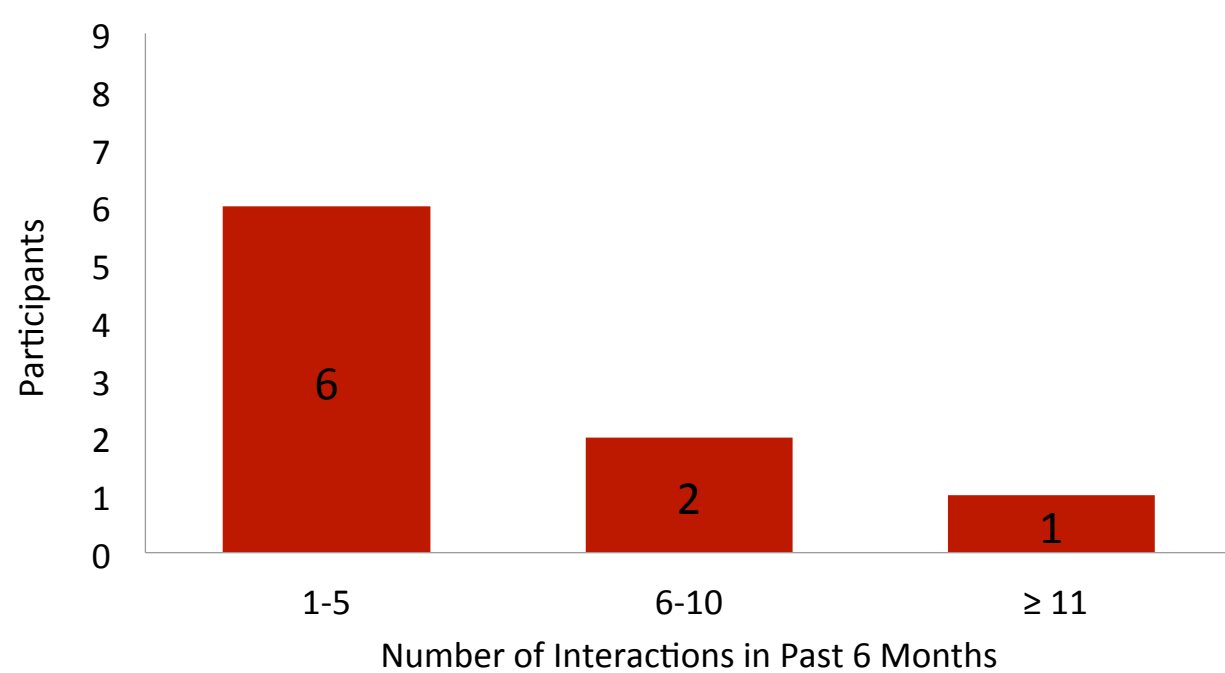


Figure 4: Types of services community pharmacists provided in the last 6 months.

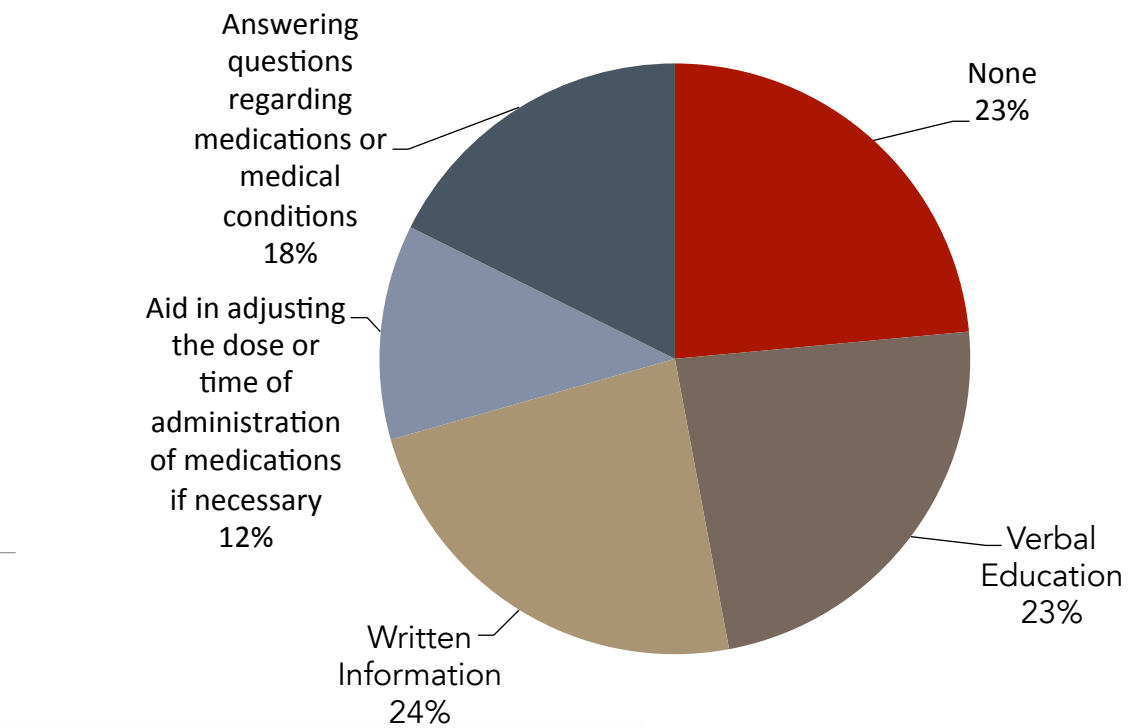
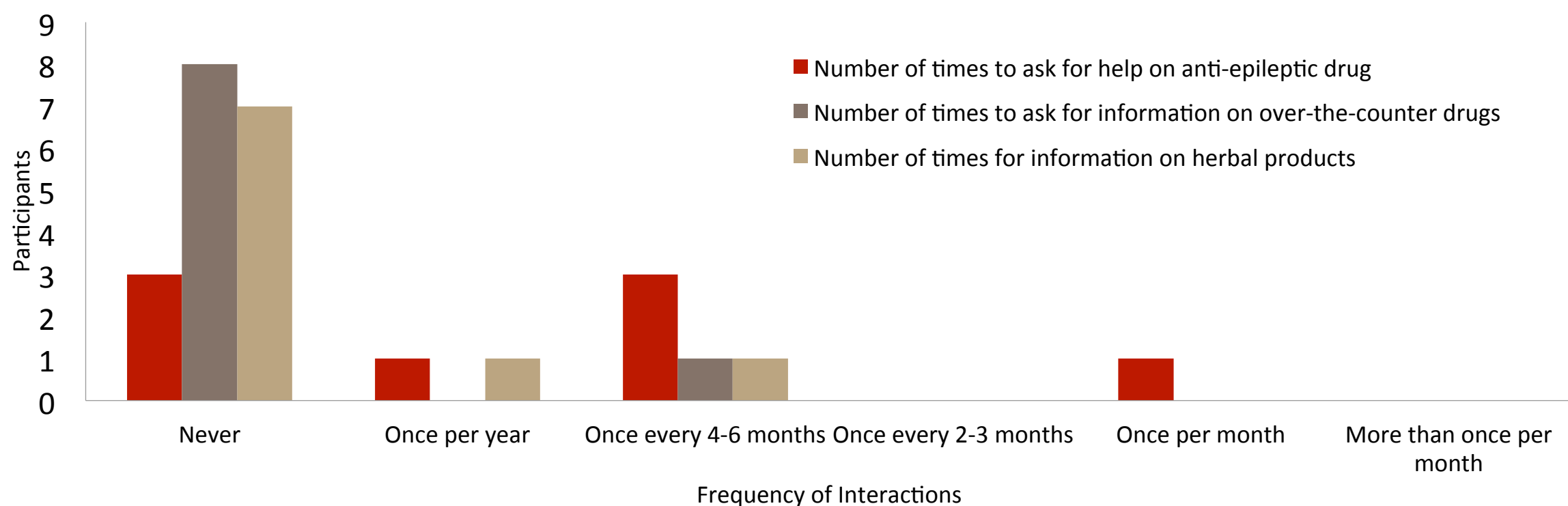


Figure 5: Frequency at which participants asked for help on drug related issues.

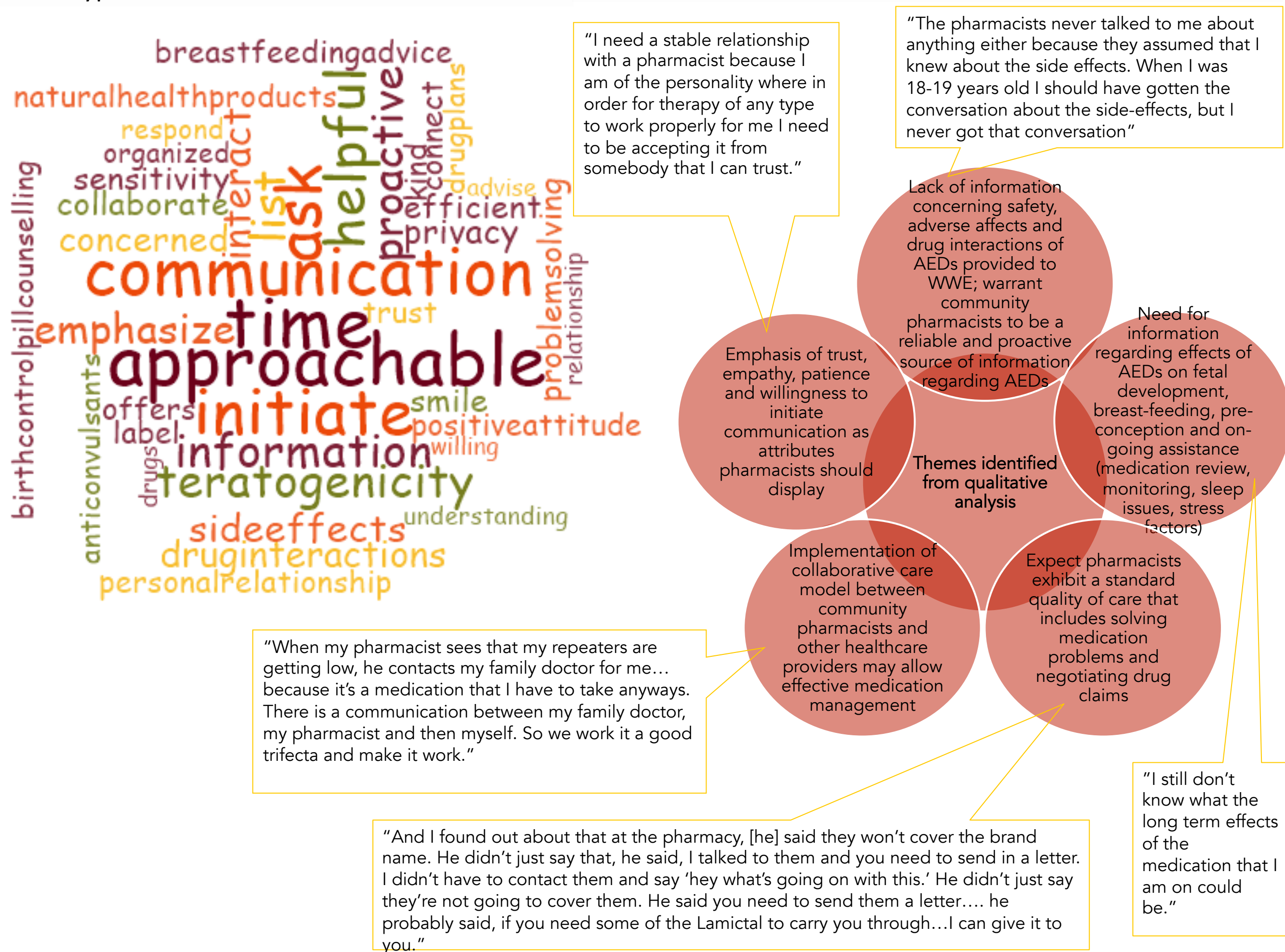


Key Findings

Figure 6: A word cloud indicating some of the most frequently used words interview participants used when describing their expectations of their community pharmacist.



Figure 7: Emerging themes identified from qualitative analysis of the focus group and one-on one interview sessions and associated quotes from interview transcripts.



Conclusions and Further Recommendations

- WWE have a strong desire and need for more information but they may not be comfortable approaching their community pharmacist for assistance.
- There is a need for specialists to connect with WWE, discuss adverse effects, clarify available AED options, promote discussion and involve patients in decision making.
- Participants expect pharmacists to endeavor to solve their medication problems from tracking medication to negotiating drug claims. Standardized quality of care and consistency in providing service are crucial and should not differ between pharmacists within the same pharmacy.
- WWE request repetitive counselling on important information, especially amongst adolescents.
- WWE need to be more well informed on the effects of AEDs on fetal development, breast feeding, and pre-conception measures.
- Future studies could measure the effectiveness of increased engagement between pharmacists and WWE on pre-conception planning, appropriate intake of folic acid, adherence to medication during pregnancy, seizure control and safety.

References

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