

# Telepharmacy & the value of integrating clinical pharmacists in general practice



**Katrina Azer**  
Digital Clinical Pharmacist in general practice

# Abstract

- Clinical pharmacy is the branch of pharmacy that focuses on optimizing medicine-related outcomes through comprehensive management of medicines
- It enhances health outcomes but also reduces the economic burden of medicines and morbidity, specifically for patients with long-term conditions.
- Shortage of clinical pharmacists and lack of funding is a barrier
- An innovative approach was adopted to integrate a clinical pharmacist into general practice remotely virtually



# Outcomes

- Virtual medicines optimization activities such as medication reviews, medicines reconciliation post-discharge, medicines counselling, clinical education to clinicians and response to clinical questions.
- Feedback strongly supports the case for embedding a clinical pharmacist in general practice virtually.
- **Prescribers** > reduced administrative task burden
- **Nurses** > reduction in time spent answering medicine-related patient queries and medicines reconciliation
- **Patients** > a better relationship with their provider, increased medicines understanding & adherence and subjectively had improvements in biomarkers (e.g.HbA1c, BP).
- Cost-saving for health system, sustainability for health workforce, increased patient access and better patient outcomes



# Addressing Health Inequities

- This model of care allows equitable access to clinical pharmacist services to remote, Māori and Pacific populations, which would have not been possible physically due to the limitations highlighted in the abstract.
- This equity in access means that clinical pharmacists can optimize medicines and health outcomes in Māori and Pacific populations with long-term conditions from anywhere in the country.
- It allows integration between providers, which is not limited by the physical presence (in this scenario the pharmacist was in Christchurch, integrated in medical practice in Auckland). It is a novel and sustainable model of care which leverages the scope and potential of all health practitioners working together to enable better health outcomes for patients.



# Implementation / Translation to Practice

- **Policy or practice implications**

- Clinical pharmacists are significantly under-utilised, they can significantly reduce the burden of chronic conditions through their expertise on the quality use of medicines and save health spending
- Virtual, remote integration of clinical pharmacists providing pharmacist-led digital health services is a sustainable strategy for the adoption of this model of care
- More providers can collaborate digitally, physical presence in the same space should not be a barrier for collaboration!



- **What levers would support this change?**

- Funding for clinical pharmacists in general practice and for education
- Medication safety needs to become a priority with data gathering about quality use of medicines – need a public policy on Quality Use of Medicines e.g.: Australia has a national medicines policy led by the Royal Commission, with the integration of pharmacists in ARC being a recent investment

# Thank You!



Katrina Azer



[katrina.azer@gmail.com](mailto:katrina.azer@gmail.com)

