

Background

Gauging where gaps exist in high-priority health care topics allows health care dollars to be directed toward programming and research efforts of highest need. Areas requiring highest health care energy can be determined by designing surveys for managed care professionals and exploring saturated responses. Obtaining stakeholder input to determine problem areas in managed care pharmacy enables identification of true and current research needs. Development of a research agenda helps identify high-priority topics that have strong potential to improve health care quality and influence healthcare change.

The goal of the AMCP/AMCP Foundation Joint Research Committee (JRC) was to determine pressing issues faced by professionals within managed care pharmacy and develop a research agenda in the future. Unlike other professions, managed care pharmacy does not have a published, consensus statement on its evidence needs. The surveying conducted by the JRC will stimulate targeted evidence generation among managed care organizations (MCOs) to address critical gaps in research.

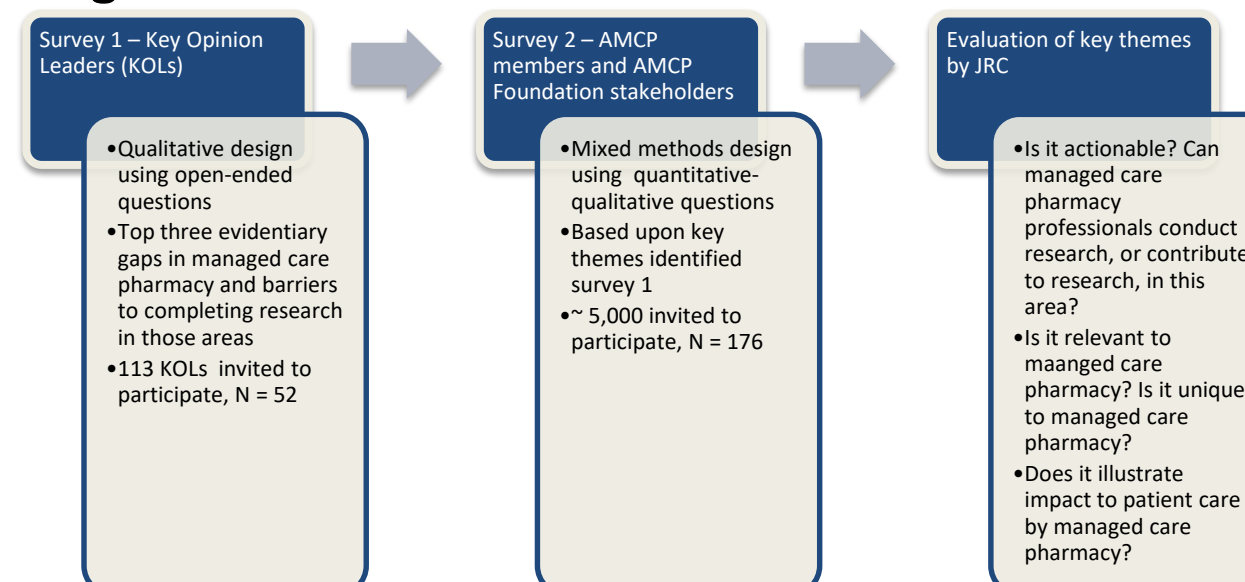
Objective

To identify high-priority evidentiary gaps in managed care pharmacy that require research efforts to advance the impact of managed care pharmacy.

Methods

Two surveys were conducted by JRC to help outline evidence needs in managed care pharmacy. [Fig. 1]. The first survey collected qualitative data from key opinion leaders (KOL) on the top three evidence gaps afflicting managed care and the barriers to closing those gaps. KOLs were selected by JRC members and AMCP/Foundation staff. Responses from the first survey served as a baseline to develop a second survey for all AMCP membership as well as AMCP Foundation stakeholders.

Fig. 1. Methods

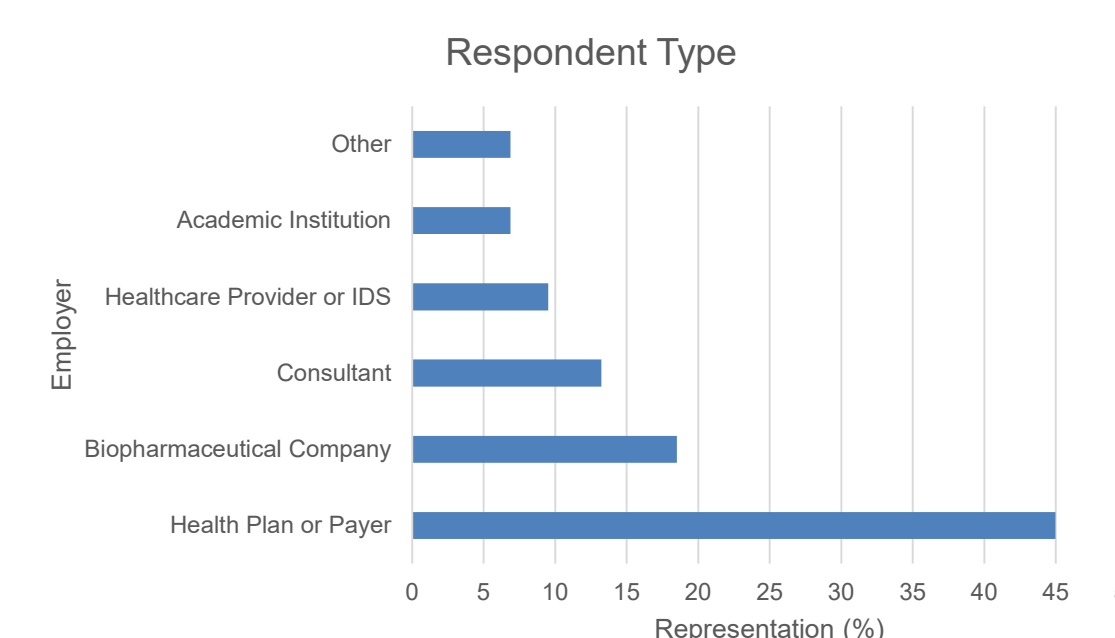
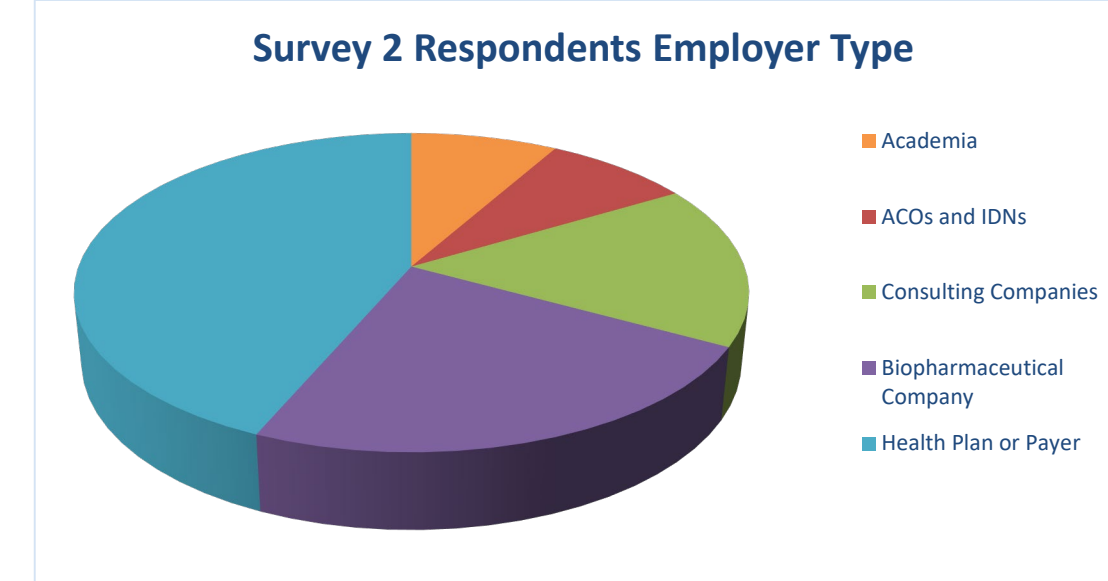


The second survey incorporated concepts from KOL responses in phase one survey results in a multiple choice, mixed qualitative-quantitative web-based survey with a comment section (9/18/17 through 9/29/17). This was conducted with representatives of US research, academia, biopharmaceutical industry, patient advocacy organizations, regulation and legislation, and AMCP membership and stakeholders across ACOs, IDNs, health plans, and PBMs (N=169). Respondents were asked to prioritize key themes identified in the phase 1 survey and give feedback on research topic selection.

Results

The response rate for this survey was 3% (n=169), with majority of respondents being pharmacists (63%) and researchers (19%). The primary employment of respondents was health plans and payers (37%), manufacturers (20%), consulting companies (14%), ACOs and IDNs (7%), and academic institutions (7%) [Fig. 2]. Respondents' employer distribution is representative of AMCP membership.

Figure 2. Respondents' Employer Type



According to JRC surveys, the greatest research needs in managed care pharmacy include [Fig.3]:

- Real-world evidence
- Value-based modeling
- Impact of utilization management on patient outcomes
- Impact of direct patient care services on patient outcomes

Fig. 3. Top Evidence Gaps in Managed Care Pharmacy

Survey 2 - Research Categories Identified as Most Important
Real-world evidence: 48%
Value-based care delivery: 27%
Benefit design: 15%
Comparative drug data: 12%
Medication therapy management: 10%

- The greatest identified gap is real-world evidence. To help determine true value and cost-effectiveness of patient interventions and benefit designs, integration of pharmacy and medical data is critical. Additionally, clinical and financial outcomes need to be examined under real-world conditions.
- The second greatest evidence gap is value-based modeling. Modeling may provide insight to utilization management programs and care access. However, data is missing on the validity to reinforce modeling use.
- Numerous research opportunities arise from the third gap, benefit design and the need to determine its impact on clinical and economic outcomes. Specifically, what is the impact of utilization management tools, indication-based pricing models, and high deductible health plans?
- These results are the roadmap for MCOs to direct high-quality research efforts to address evidence gaps afflicting managed care pharmacy.

Limitations

- This study does not include follow-up with respondents after survey completion; therefore, limiting the depth behind results described
- Due to limited response rate, caution should be exercised when generalizing results
- Responses were reflective of personal viewpoints on evidence gaps, and may not be reflective of the respondent's employer or industry segment
- Industry representation was primarily skewed to health plan and payer employers which may skew the evidence gaps established
- Due to the dynamic nature of healthcare, evidence gap consensus is bound to change and this survey is unable to include these changes

Conclusion

Identifying priority evidence gaps is crucial to advancing health care through appropriately targeted research. Through two phases of surveys, JRC collected a consensus on evidence gaps important to managed care entities to be addressed. Managed care is ready for funders and researchers to close the evidence gap on these high-priority topics—real-world evidence, value-based decision-making, and benefit design and utilization management to include impact of services on patient outcomes.

Next Steps

JRC is advocating for managed care pharmacy entities to initiate research efforts to address these high-priority evidence gaps afflicting managed care. The primary audience JRC would like to target includes funders, researchers, AMCP membership, and AMCP Foundation stakeholders representative of managed care pharmacy diversity. Funders and researchers can work together to encourage and implement research areas important within managed care pharmacy. JRC looks forward to publishing a manuscript in the *Journal of Managed Care and Specialty Pharmacy* this year to outline research agenda development and areas for managed care pharmacy to focus research efforts.

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