



# Study of factors influencing the occurrence of conflicts in pharmacies

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A – research concept and design; B – collection and/or assembly of data; C – data analysis and interpretation; D – writing the article; E – critical revision of the article; F – final approval of the article

**The aim** of the study was to investigate the factors influencing the occurrence of conflicts in pharmacies during the provision of pharmaceutical care, with the subsequent goal of optimizing the social and psychological climate within the team and improving the quality of service to the population.

**Materials and methods.** Systematic-analytical, mathematical statistical, comparative, and sociological research methods were employed in the study. Descriptive statistics were utilized to present the obtained data. To assess the significance of individual factors, the questionnaire results were converted into corresponding component weights ( $W_{ij}$ ).

**Results.** The study of conflicts between visitors and pharmacy employees, from the point of view of visitors, revealed several key findings. Most customers expressed dissatisfaction with the prices of medicines and medical devices ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ). Additionally, there were concerns about the perceived quality of the products ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ), and some customers reported feeling distressed due to the unavailability of necessary medicines ( $W_{ij} = 0.57$ ). The study, conducted from the point of view of employees, focused on conflicts between employees and visitors. The findings revealed that conflicts most often arise due to dissatisfaction with the prices of medicines and medical devices ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ). Additionally, issues such as requests to dispense over-the-counter medicines from the list of prescription drugs ( $W_{ij} = 0.70$ ) and returning medicines to the pharmacy after purchase ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ) were identified as contributing factors. The analysis of factors that provoke conflicts in the pharmacy team revealed several key contributors. The most significant include the inadequate behavior of employees ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ), inconsistency in words, assessments, and actions of some team members with the expectations and requirements of others ( $W_{ij} = 0.89$ ), and psychological incompatibility between employees ( $W_{ij} = 0.88$ ). The study of conflicts between the administration and subordinates in the pharmacy revealed frequent occurrences linked to several factors. Most notably, conflicts were associated with an imperfect bonus system ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ), high workload ( $W_{ij} = 0.92$ ), and a perceived lack of career development opportunities ( $W_{ij} = 0.76$ ).

**Conclusions.** The factors that contribute to the emergence of conflict situations in pharmacies have been identified and studied. Approaches to preventing and resolving conflicts by pharmacy employees are proposed.

**Keywords:** pharmacy, pharmaceutical care, conflict factors, pharmacy visitors.

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## Дослідження факторів, що впливають на виникнення конфліктів в аптечних закладах

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**Мета роботи** – дослідження факторів, які впливають на виникнення конфліктів в аптечних закладах при наданні фармацевтичної допомоги, з подальшою оптимізацією соціально-психологічного клімату в колективі та підвищенням якості обслуговування населення.

**Матеріали і методи.** У роботі використано системно-аналітичний, математико-статистичні, порівняльний і соціологічні методи дослідження. Для репрезентації одержаних даних застосовано методи описової статистики. Для визначення значущості окремих факторів їх оцінки, отримані в результаті анкетування, перераховано до відповідної питомої ваги компоненти ( $W_{ij}$ ).

**Результати.** Вивчення конфліктів між відвідувачами та співробітниками аптек з погляду відвідувачів показало, що більшість покупців незадоволені цінами на ліки та медичні вироби ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ), мають сумніви щодо їхньої якості ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ), а також покупців пригнічує відсутність потрібних лікарських засобів ( $W_{ij} = 0.57$ ). Дослідження конфліктів між працівниками та відвідувачами з погляду працівників дало змогу встановити, що найчастіше конфлікти виникають через незадоволеність цінами на ліки і медичні вироби ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ), а також через прохання відпустити ліки без рецепта зі списку рецептурних препаратів ( $W_{ij} = 0.70$ ) та повернення лікарських засобів в аптеку після придбання ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ). Аналіз факторів, які провокують конфлікти в колективі аптек, засвідчив, що найбільш значущою є неадекватна поведінка співробітників ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ), невідповідність слів, оцінок, вчинків одних членів колективу очікуванням, вимогам інших ( $W_{ij} = 0.89$ ), а також психологічна несумісність між співробітниками ( $W_{ij} = 0.88$ ). Вивчення конфліктів між

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**Keywords:** pharmacy, pharmaceutical care, conflict factors, pharmacy visitors.

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адміністрацією і підлеглими в аптечному закладі засвідчило, що найчастіше конфлікти відбуваються через недосконалу систему преміювання ( $W_{ij} = 1,00$ ), високий рівень завантаженості ( $W_{ij} = 0,92$ ) і відсутність можливості кар'єрного зростання ( $W_{ij} = 0,76$ ).

**Висновки.** Визначено та досліджено фактори, що спричиняють конфліктні ситуації в аптечних закладах. Запропоновано підходи щодо запобігання та розв'язання конфліктів працівниками аптек.

**Ключові слова:** аптека, фармацевтична допомога, конфліктні фактори, відвідувачі аптеки.

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Conflicts have become an everyday reality in contemporary society. Pharmacists, particularly those on the sales floor, often confront conflicts in their professional activities [1]. The majority of one's time at work involves interactions with management, colleagues, subordinates, and customers. The constrained nature of communication timelines exposes specialists to various factors that can lead to misunderstandings, ultimately giving rise to conflicts. The negative consequences of conflicts include people's dissatisfaction with common goals, avoidance of problem-solving, and the weakening of team cohesion, among other issues [2,3]. Furthermore, conflicts in pharmacies are often linked to a low level of socially responsible behavior among pharmacists [4].

Recent data have examined the most common causes of conflicts in pharmacies. Studies by M. Karimova and O. Makarenko explored potential types of conflicts among pharmacy employees, offering proposed solutions to address them [5]. Additionally, A. Chehrynets, H. Babicheva, and O. Rohula analyzed methods for overcoming and resolving conflict situations that can be employed by pharmacy professionals [6].

Nevertheless, the matters concerning the formation of the social and psychological climate within a team remain pertinent, as they are continually influenced by external factors over time.

## Aim

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing the occurrence of conflicts in pharmacies during the provision of pharmaceutical care with the subsequent optimization of the social and psychological climate in the team and the improvement of the quality of service to the population.

## Materials and methods

Systematic-analytical, mathematical statistical, comparative, and sociological research methods were employed in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to present the data obtained.

When planning the experiment, we have used Lark's approach to establishing the significance of certain parameters of trade enterprises [7].

To compile a list of factors that most frequently lead to conflicts in pharmacies, a specialized questionnaire comprising 15 questions was developed.

To assess the significance of these factors, the survey results were converted into corresponding component weights ( $W_{ij}$ ). The responses for each factor were aggregated, with the factor receiving the highest score standardized to '1.'

The significance of other factors was then calculated as the ratio of the sum of responses to the parameter that attained the maximum score.

In total, 74 questionnaires were received from pharmacy visitors and 49 questionnaires from employees of the pharmacy chains of the municipal enterprise "Primula" and LLC "ANC" (Zaporizhzhia city).

To determine the rating of factors that shape consumer satisfaction with the work of pharmacists, additional studies were conducted to assess the importance of factors that influence consumer choice [7].

## Results

The results of the survey of pharmacists and drug users on the occurrence of conflicts between them allowed us to identify the main factors that cause them (Table 1).

As can be seen from Table 1, the results of the survey of pharmacy visitors and pharmacists differ significantly.

In the second stage of the study, the factors influencing the occurrence of conflicts between pharmacy employees were investigated (Table 2).

Next, we studied the factors that influence the emergence of conflicts between the administration and staff of pharmacies. The results of the study are presented in Table 3.

## Discussion

According to the results obtained, it was found that the majority of buyers are dissatisfied with the prices of medicines and medical devices ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ) and also doubt their quality ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ).

Quite often, there is a situation when the required medicine is unavailable in the pharmacy ( $W_{ij} = 0.57$ ). Some visitors attempted to return purchased medicines to the pharmacy ( $W_{ij} = 0.38$ ). The survey also indicated that visitors rarely encountered expired products ( $W_{ij} = 0.31$ ), and instructions were consistently available, except when buying a single plate of a drug ( $W_{ij} = 0.31$ ). The majority of respondents reported never requesting prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription ( $W_{ij} = 0.30$ ) (Table 1).

According to pharmacists, the primary source of customer dissatisfaction lies in the prices of medicines and medical devices ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ). Pharmacists also frequently encounter situations where they are asked to dispense medicines without a doctor's prescription from the list of prescription drugs ( $W_{ij} = 0.70$ ). Conflicts occasionally arise when visitors attempt to return medicine to the pharmacy ( $W_{ij} = 0.67$ ), a practice prohibited by law. Visitors express irritation when faced with the unavailability of some medicines at the mo-

**Table 1.** Significance of factors that influence the occurrence of conflicts between pharmacy visitors and pharmacists

From the point of view of pharmacy visitors			From the perspective of pharmacists		
Factors	Rank	Specific gravity of components ( $W_{ij}$ )	Factors	Rank	Specific gravity of components ( $W_{ij}$ )
Problems related to drug prices	1	1	Problems related to drug prices	1	1
Quality of medicines and medical devices	2	0.67	Refusal to dispense non-prescription drugs from the list of prescription drugs	2	0.70
Lack of necessary medicines in a given pharmacy	3	0.57	Refusal to take medicines back to the pharmacy	3	0.67
Refusal to take medicines back to the pharmacy	4	0.38	Lack of necessary medicines in a given pharmacy	4	0.59
Lack of instructions for use of medicines	5	0.31	Quality of medicines and medical devices	5	0.53
Dispensing of expired medicines	6	0.31	Dispensing of expired medicines	6	0.33
Refusal to dispense non-prescription drugs from the list of prescription drugs	7	0.30	Lack of instructions for use of medicines	7	0.31

**Table 2.** The importance of factors influencing the emergence of conflicts in the teams of pharmacies

Factors	Rank	Specific gravity of components ( $W_{ij}$ )
Wrong actions of team members (personal disorganization, selfish desires, aggression)	1	1.00
The discrepancy between the words, assessments, and actions of some team members and the expectations and requirements of other team members	2	0.89
Psychological incompatibility of employees (clash of goals, attitudes, interests, motives)	3	0.88
Different views on the methods of fulfilling the assigned tasks	4	0.82
The presence of "difficult people" in the team ("aggressors", "complainers", "boredom") creates a state of social tension	5	0.81
Poor performance of functional duties by team members	6	0.71
Lack or distortion of information, misinterpretation of the tasks received	7	0.70
Competition between employees	8	0.70
Poor communication (lack of mutual understanding)	9	0.64
Differences in plans and goals	10	0.56

**Table 3.** The importance of factors influencing the emergence of conflicts between the administration and staff of pharmacies

Factors	Rank	Specific gravity of components ( $W_{ij}$ )
Imperfect labor remuneration system	1	1.00
High level of workload	2	0.92
Lack of opportunities for job and professional growth	3	0.76
Unfavorable labor conditions	4	0.68
Unsatisfactory work and rest schedule	5	0.66
Low labor remuneration	6	0.66
Unfair distribution of rights and responsibilities	7	0.44
Unfair evaluation of employees and their work	8	0.40
Irrational selection and placement of personnel	9	0.35
Non-compliance with labor laws	10	0.35
Low level of discipline	11	0.34

ment ( $W_{ij} = 0.59$ ). Additionally, some visitors voice complaints about the quality of medicines and medical devices ( $W_{ij} = 0.53$ ), questionable expiration dates ( $W_{ij} = 0.33$ ), and the absence of instructions for use ( $W_{ij} = 0.31$ ).

In comparing responses to identical questions from both visitors and pharmacy employees, it was noted that they share similar opinions regarding the prices of medicines, expiration dates, and the availability of instructions. However, divergent views emerge in other aspects. Pharmacists assert that the quality of medicines is high, whereas some visitors express the belief that the quality of medicines is unsatisfactory.

The study identified the primary factors provoking conflicts within pharmacy teams. Foremost among them is the inadequate behavior of some employees, characterized by aggressiveness and selfishness ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ). Following closely is the discrepancy between the words, assessments, and actions of certain team members and the expectations and requirements of others ( $W_{ij} = 0.89$ ). Psychological incompatibility between employees also plays an equally crucial role ( $W_{ij} = 0.88$ ). Frequently, the team faces division on how to fulfill assigned tasks ( $W_{ij} = 0.82$ ). Within the pharmacy team, common challenges include dealing with ‘difficult people’ categorized as ‘aggressors,’ ‘complainers,’ and ‘boredom’ ( $W_{ij} = 0.81$ ). Respondents also noted concerns about not all team members performing their functional duties well ( $W_{ij} = 0.71$ ). Complaints about the lack or distortion of information ( $W_{ij} = 0.70$ ) and competition between employees ( $W_{ij} = 0.70$ ) were less frequent. Communication between employees received high satisfaction ratings across all surveyed pharmacies ( $W_{ij} = 0.64$ ). The least significant factor contributing to conflicts was limited resources ( $W_{ij} = 0.53$ ) (Table 2).

The study of conflicts between the staff and the administration revealed that they most often arise due to an imperfect bonus system ( $W_{ij} = 1.00$ ). In 7 out of 9 pharmacies, there is no system of bonus incentives. The next factor is the high level of workload of pharmacists at the workplace ( $W_{ij} = 0.92$ ). The majority of respondents believe that they do not have any opportunities for career growth ( $W_{ij} = 0.76$ ). An important factor is unfavorable working conditions ( $W_{ij} = 0.68$ ). Pharmacy employees say they are dissatisfied with their work-life balance ( $W_{ij} = 0.66$ ) and salary ( $W_{ij} = 0.66$ ). The distribution of responsibilities ( $W_{ij} = 0.44$ ) and the evaluation of employees for their work ( $W_{ij} = 0.40$ ), according to the respondents, are generally fair. Labor laws are observed in pharmacies ( $W_{ij} = 0.35$ ). Managers and supervisors maintain a high level of discipline in the team ( $W_{ij} = 0.34$ ). Respondents noted that salaries are always paid on time ( $W_{ij} = 0.28$ ). Managers in pharmacies fully comply with work ethics ( $W_{ij} = 0.27$ ).

## Conclusions

1. The study identified and examined factors contributing to conflict situations in pharmacies, encompassing interactions between pharmacy visitors and pharmaceutical workers, among team members, and between the administration and the pharmaceutical team. The most significant factors have been highlighted.

2. Based on the study’s findings, the authors have proposed measures to reduce the level of conflict situations, aiming to optimize the socio-psychological climate within the team and enhance the quality of service to the population

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