The nature and prevalence of prescription dispensing services in the developing world: evidence from the nationwide community pharmacy survey

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### Introduction

Traditionally, the main role of the pharmacist has been to prepare and dispense medicines. Recently, however, the number of tasks that are expected of them has grown as pharmacists are now often involved in several activities to ensure the safe dispensing of medicines\textsuperscript{1}. There is limited evidence regarding the characteristics and prevalence of the dispensing and whether pharmacists were genuinely able to cope with the increasing activities within the pharmacy particularly in the context of developing country\textsuperscript{2}. Therefore, this study aims to describe and quantify the provision of dispensing service in Indonesian community pharmacy.

### Methods

This study has been ethically approved by the Research Ethics Committee of The Faculty of Public Health Universitas Airlangga.

### Results

Only 1,952 pharmacies responded to the survey. Most of these pharmacies were independent outlet (82\%) employing only one pharmacist (82\%) and 1-2 technicians (91\%).

![Dispensed prescriptions per month (%)](image)

A significant portion of pharmacies conducted prescription analysis (77\%), counselling (87\%) and drug information (89\%) to patients, respectively.

### Discussion

There is diminishing trend for dispensing prescription in most community pharmacies in Indonesia. On one hand, this may provide more opportunities for pharmacist to deliver the services attentively leading to a better accuracy. However, on the other hand, this may affect the financial viability of the pharmacy as dispensing prescription is eventually one of the main income streams for a pharmacy. Dispensing has been long perceived as main task of pharmacist in Indonesia\textsuperscript{1}. The shifting trend shows possibility for another service\textsuperscript{4}.

### Conclusions

Dispensing prescription remains an important activity yet diminishing in Indonesian community pharmacy. There is potential to develop other services as an adjunct to dispensing service.

### Table 1. Landscape of community pharmacy in Indonesia\textsuperscript{3}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of facilities</th>
<th>Pharmacist</th>
<th>Technician</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>30,099</td>
<td>30,116</td>
<td>42,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>2,877</td>
<td>10,118</td>
<td>25,437</td>
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<td>Public health center</td>
<td>10,134</td>
<td>4,986</td>
<td>11,008</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References

3. Ministry of Health of Indonesia. (2020). The Indonesian Health Profile

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