Sejal Patel, Pharm.D. and Evana Robbani, Pharm.D., Multidisciplinary Fellows, Novo Nordisk Inc. 
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Scope of Medical Information Services across Pharmaceutical Industry

OBJECTIVE

Previous research was conducted to benchmark Medical Information (MI) services provided across pharmaceutical industry including call handling through call centers and involvement in the promotional review process.2 The purpose of this study was to gather updated benchmarking data for the scope of MI services across various pharmaceutical, biopharmaceutical, and medical device companies.

METHODS

- 202-29 question, web-based survey was developed to assess practices related to unsolicited medical queries, call center scripts, call escalations, promotional review processes, and other MI services.
- Participants were identified using distribution lists maintained by an internal database.

DEFINITIONS

Medical Information: the department chiefly responsible for providing internal and external customers with accurate, fair, balanced, and current medical information about products and/or disease states.

Call center: the department that handles incoming phone calls from healthcare professionals (HCPs) and/or consumers.

Call escalations: medical calls received by the call center that require transfer to a specialized tier of HCPs or other qualified specialists.

Promotional Review Board (PRB): a board of cross-functional team members that review promotional materials prior to external use.

RESULTS

- 17 out of 31 (55%) respondents indicated that their company’s call center utilizes scripted responses, primarily created, approved, and maintained by MI.

Call Center

- 10 out of 13 respondents indicated their call center is overseen by a medical department.
- 13 out of 24 (54%) respondents indicated that quality of work can lead to various consequences.

Call Escalations

- The results of this study confirm that the services provided by MI departments vary from company to company. These results may be helpful for companies who wish to modify or expand their MI services.

Promotional Review

- It is reasonable to expect that staffing call centers with specially-trained HCPs would reduce the number of call escalations, as evidenced by Figure 1 and Figure 4.

DISCUSSION

- With a majority of companies outsourcing their call center services, the role of MI supporting these vendors is increasingly important to ensure callers receive accurate and current information.
- While many retail companies heavily rely on online chat services for customer support, it is interesting to note that there has not been an uptick of this service within the pharma space.
- There are variations in how medical teams support promotional review processes across the industry.
- Pharmaceutical companies may find it beneficial to create an internal process for validating the quality of vendor work in order to better utilize their financial and human resources. This study did not further investigate methods of tracking quality; however, it would be interesting to explore the influencing factors that lead to draft promotional material being rejected due to quality issues.

The results of this study confirm that the services provided by MI departments vary from company to company. These results may be helpful for companies who wish to modify or expand their MI services.

REFERENCES