

# Effects of a National Health Education Program on the Medication Knowledge of the Public in Taiwan,

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## Abstract

The inappropriate use of medication and inadequate medication knowledge among the general population has long been a concern in Taiwan. One reason for the deficiencies might be the lack of an active role of pharmacists in educating the public. To rectify the situation, in 2002, the Bureau of Pharmaceutical Affairs, Department of Health of Taiwan, began to sponsor a national effort, titled Community Education Program on Medication Use, to involve the expertise of pharmacists in public education. OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the effects of this education program by analyzing the changes in knowledge of drug therapy among the participating public. METHODS: This was a single-group pre- and post-comparison study. Between September 2003 and January 2004, a total of 955 community residents enrolled in the pharmacist-facilitated education program offered at 31 community universities. The medication knowledge of the participants was evaluated before and after the program. Demographic variables that might affect the education outcomes of the program were also examined. RESULTS: Medication knowledge at baseline was positively correlated with education level and negatively correlated with age. Females were more aware of drug-related information than were males. The participants showed a significant improvement in medication knowledge ( $p < 0.001$ ) at the end of the program. The baseline knowledge score was the most important determinant of the improvement of the posttest score. CONCLUSIONS: A national education program facilitated by pharmacists can improve the medication knowledge of the participants. Pharmacists should be encouraged to play a proactive role in large-scale health education programs.