



The Power of Physician Referral for Pharmacist MTM Service Provision

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BACKGROUND

- Logistical and perceptual challenges have faced pharmacists implementing patient care services such as Medication Therapy Management (MTM).
- Physician referral of patients to a pharmacist would help legitimate pharmacists' direct care roles.
- Physician referral could reduce patient apprehension about how interacting with a pharmacist might affect the patient-physician relationship.
- A pilot project was designed to develop and evaluate referrals for MTM services among four pharmacist-physician dyads in four communities.

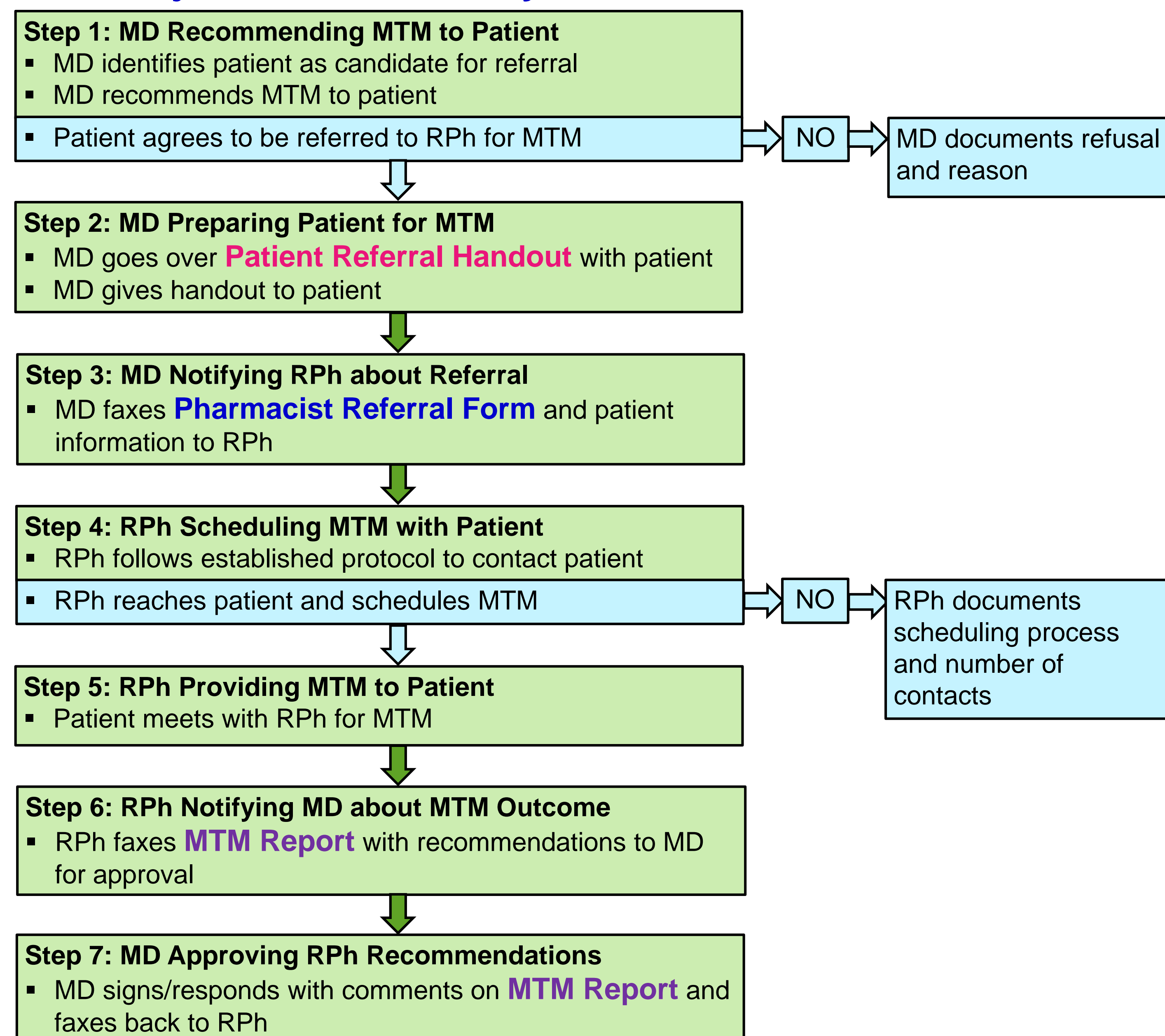
STUDY OBJECTIVES

- To evaluate the success of physician referrals of patients to pharmacists for MTM services.
- To explore possible factors influencing a physician's successful referral attempts

METHODS

- Desired pharmacist services for patients were identified.
- Referral procedures and materials were developed and implemented.
- Physician and pharmacist evaluation interviews were conducted.
- Patients were interviewed by phone after receiving their MTM services

Project Process for Physician-Pharmacist Referral



RESULTS

- MD Perspectives:** (N = 3 physicians)
 - 31 patients were identified and offered referrals to see a pharmacist for MTM.
 - 77.4% of patients (n = 24) agreed to the referral.
 - Successful referral rates ranged from 62.5 to 100%.

Table 1: Factors influencing patients agreeing to physician referral attempts

Referrals	Factors
Agreement	1. Patient trust in their physician
	2. Patient perception that they needed help with managing their medications
	3. Patient Referral Handout proved useful for physician to explain referred services and reason for referral to the patient
Refusal	1. Patient not having patronage at referral pharmacy
	2. Inconvenient location of referral pharmacy in relation to the clinic
	3. Patient feeling overwhelmed with too many appointments
	4. Patient perception that service was not needed since they already received adequate medication advice and help from their physician.

- RPh Perspectives:** (N = 3 pharmacists)
 - 87% of those referred (n = 20/23) received MTM services from a pharmacist.
 - 3 Patients did not see a pharmacist (death, hospitalization, unreachable).
 - Existing patronage (Rx/LTC) rates at referral pharmacy ranged from 50.0 to 100%.

Table 2: Referral success and existing pharmacy patronage rates

MD	Patients Identified (n = 30)	Patients Agreed (n = 23)	Success Rate	RPh	Completed MTM (n = 20)	Pharmacy Customer	Existing Patronage Rate
1st	8	5	62.5%	1st	5	5	100%
2nd	14	10	71.4%	2nd	8	6	75.0%
3rd	9	9	100%	3rd	8	4	50.0%

- MD + RPh Perspectives:**
 - All found referral forms and handouts helpful and simple to use.

Pharmacist Referral Form (Faxed by MD to RPh)

Patient Referral Handout (Given by MD to Patient)

MTM Report (1. Faxed by RPh to MD for approval; 2. Faxed by MD to RPh with signature)

RESULTS

- Patient Perspectives:** (N = 19 patients)
 - Most patients were very satisfied and found the MTM service to be very useful
 - Several transferred their prescriptions over to the referral pharmacy
 - Value of MTM service was MORE recognized AFTER:
 - Subsequent visits with their physicians
 - Pharmacist recommended changes were implemented
 - Good patient relations from existing pharmacy patronage contributed to their positivism for the pharmacist with regard to the MTM interaction
 - Patients were not aware that pharmacists are already providing MTM service
 - Some patients did not differentiate MTM service from routine pharmacist consultation at pharmacy

CONCLUSIONS

- Physicians and pharmacists are interested in working collaboratively to improve their patients' medication management. These partnerships are possible.
- Physician referral was instrumental for patient acceptance of MTM services from the pharmacist.
 - However, not all patients agreed to the MTM referral when they needed to go to a different pharmacy.
- Materials and procedures developed with both physician and pharmacist input help facilitate success with referring and patient uptake of MTM services.

LIMITATIONS

- As a pilot project, only a small number of physicians, pharmacists, and patients were included.
- The time between MTM service and patient interviews varied considerably.
 - Some patient perspectives were more favorable about the pharmacist because recommendations were implemented after subsequent visits with their physicians.

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