

PERSPECTIVES OF PHYSICIANS ON THE INTEGRATION OF HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY HEALTHCARE TEAMS

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Background and importance

Hospital pharmacists' role in patient care is essential, as they contribute to medication prescribing and administration safety by supporting medical decision-making within multidisciplinary teams. However, there is limited research done on hospital pharmacy practices in Central and Eastern European countries.

In recent years, a few publications have addressed this topic, revealing significant gaps in the understanding and integration of hospital pharmacists. Although 19 (31.67%) hospitals out of 60 in Lithuania hold a hospital pharmacy license, the roles and potential contributions of hospital pharmacists within these settings remain largely unexplored.

In contrast, healthcare systems in Western European countries benefit from integrating hospital pharmacists, whose involvement has been shown to improve patient medication safety and outcomes.

Understanding (knowledge) how doctors perceive the integration of pharmacists into healthcare teams is crucial for improving collaboration and enhancing patient care outcomes. Identifying key barriers and enablers can help strengthen multidisciplinary teamwork and improve medication safety.

Aim and objectives

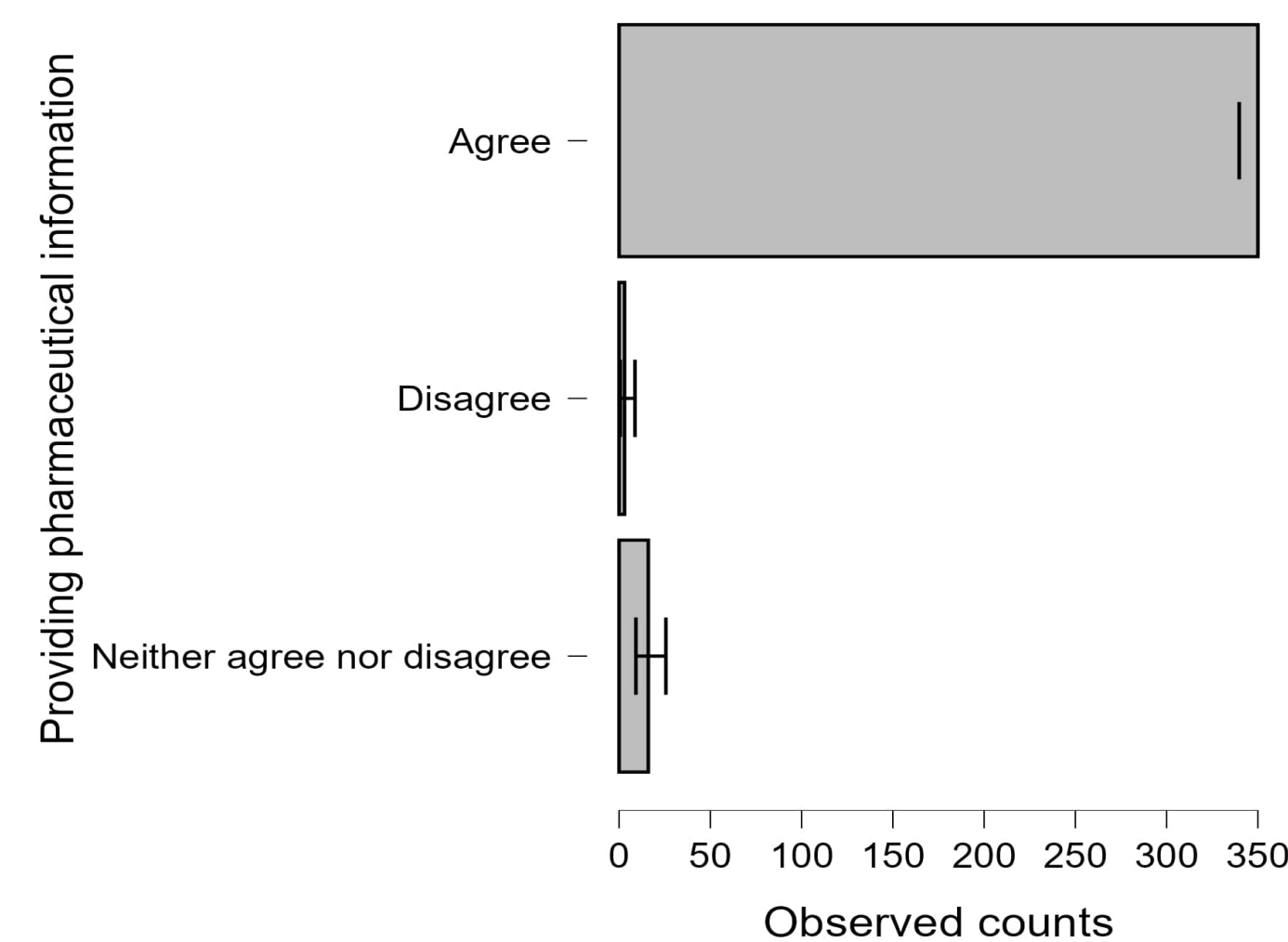
The study aims to investigate physicians' general knowledge of the roles and functions that hospital pharmacists could provide within their clinical practice.

Material and methods

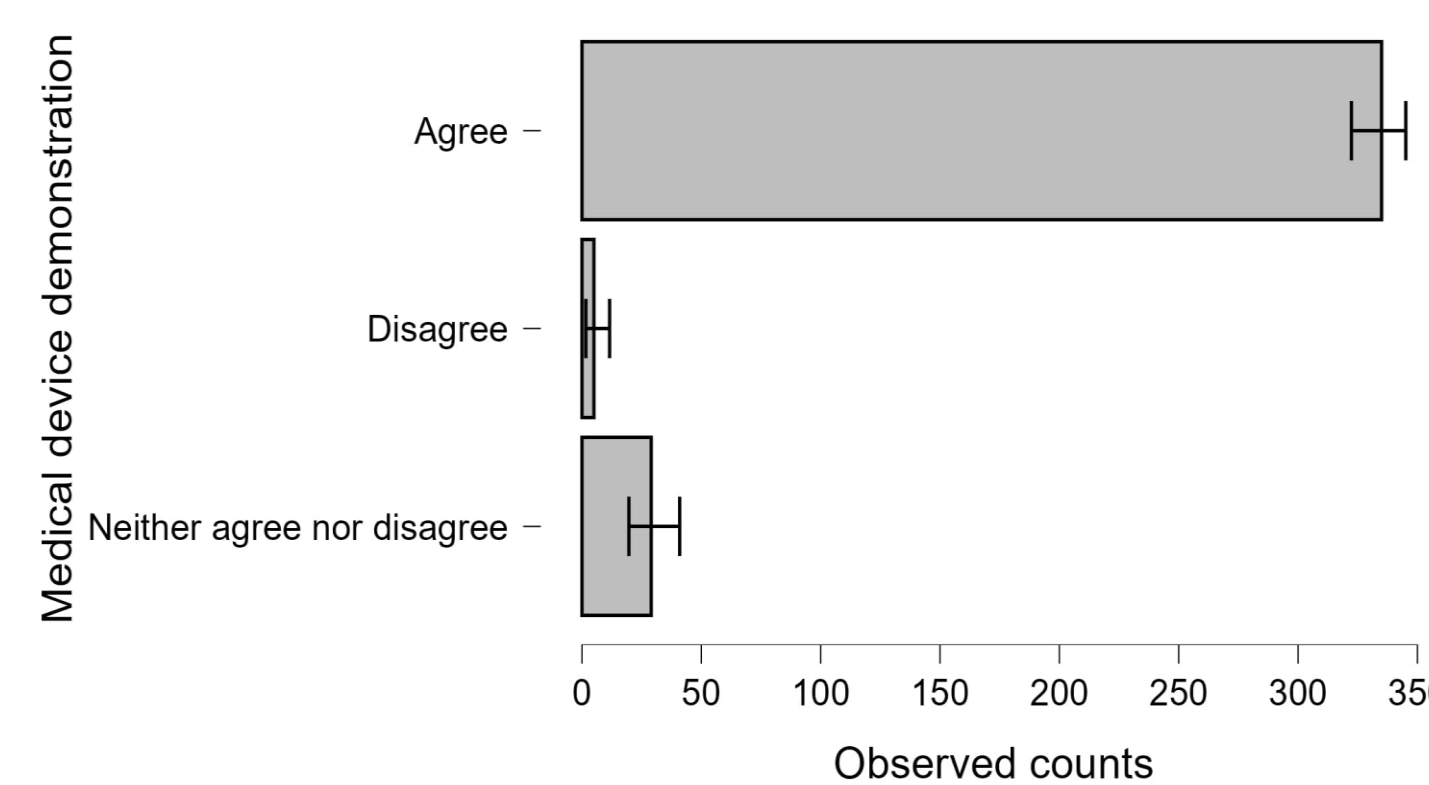
An online questionnaire was created to assess physicians' knowledge of the potential roles of hospital pharmacists in hospital workflow and their willingness to integrate pharmacists into multidisciplinary healthcare teams.

The questionnaire was sent via e-mail to doctors of various specializations. Quantitative data were captured through multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions, while qualitative data was collected via a free-text box.

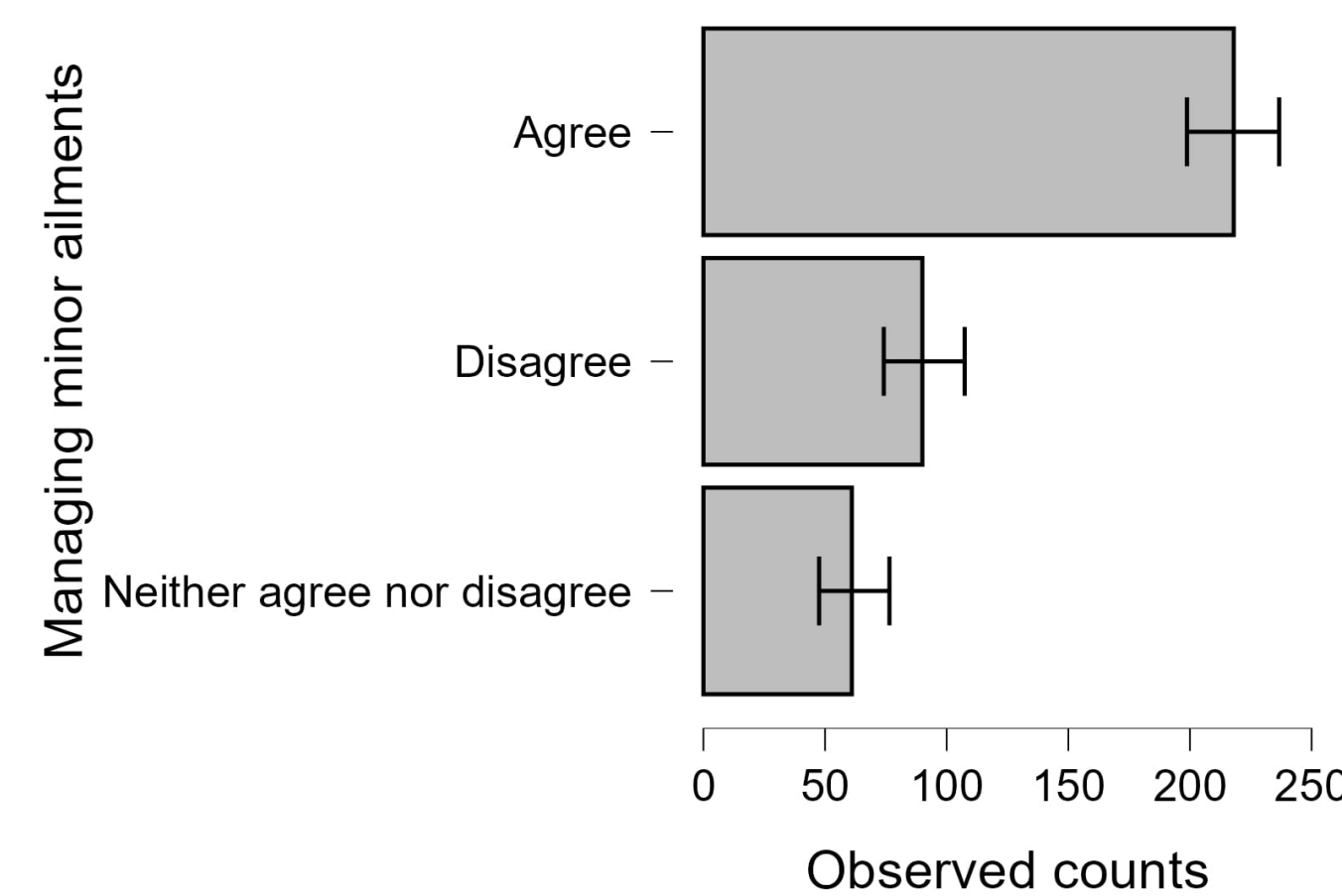
Results



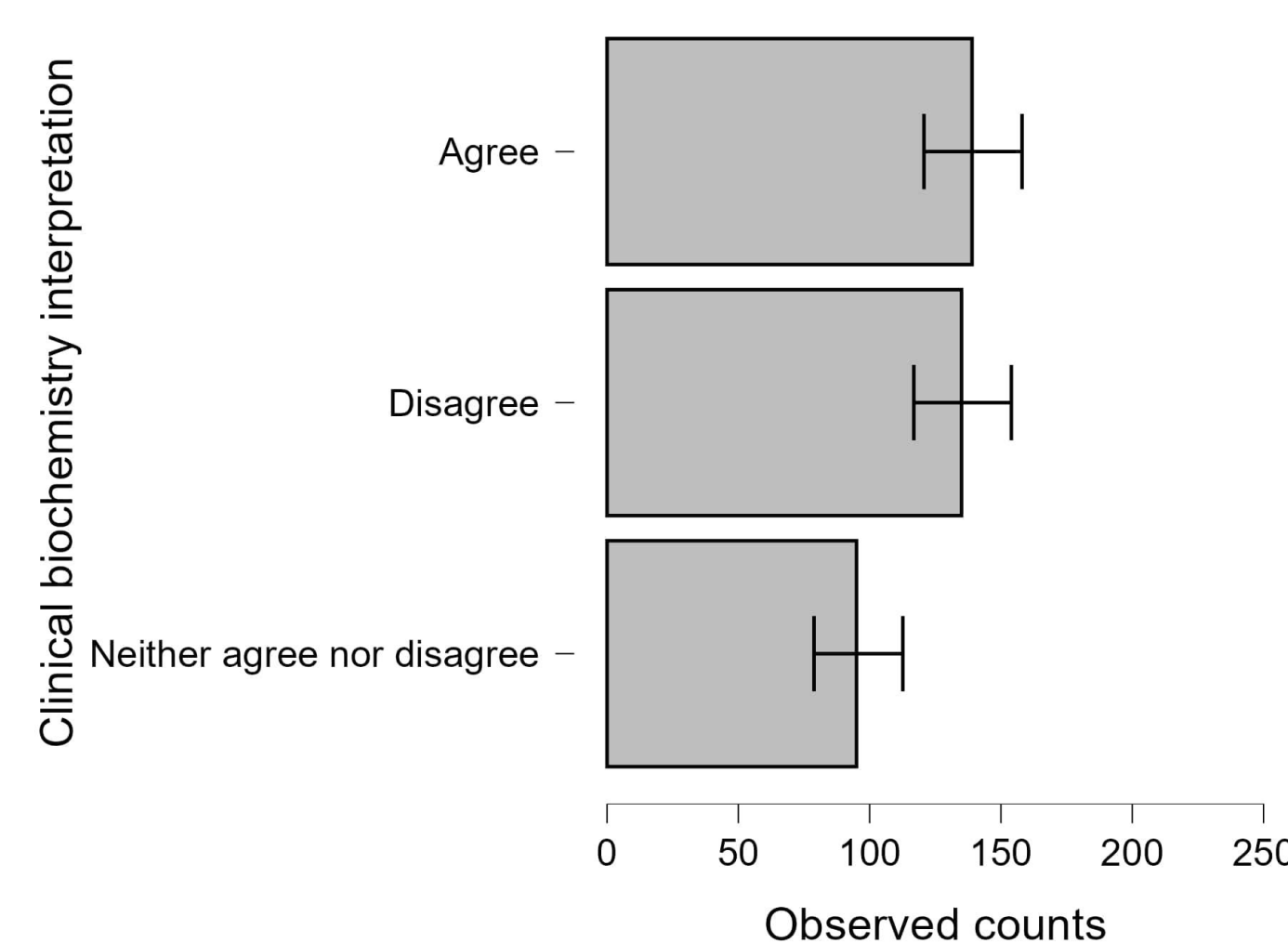
Nearly all physicians support the provision of pharmaceutical information by hospital pharmacists, with 94.9% in agreement (n=350), 0.8% in disagreement (n=3), and 4.3% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (n=16).



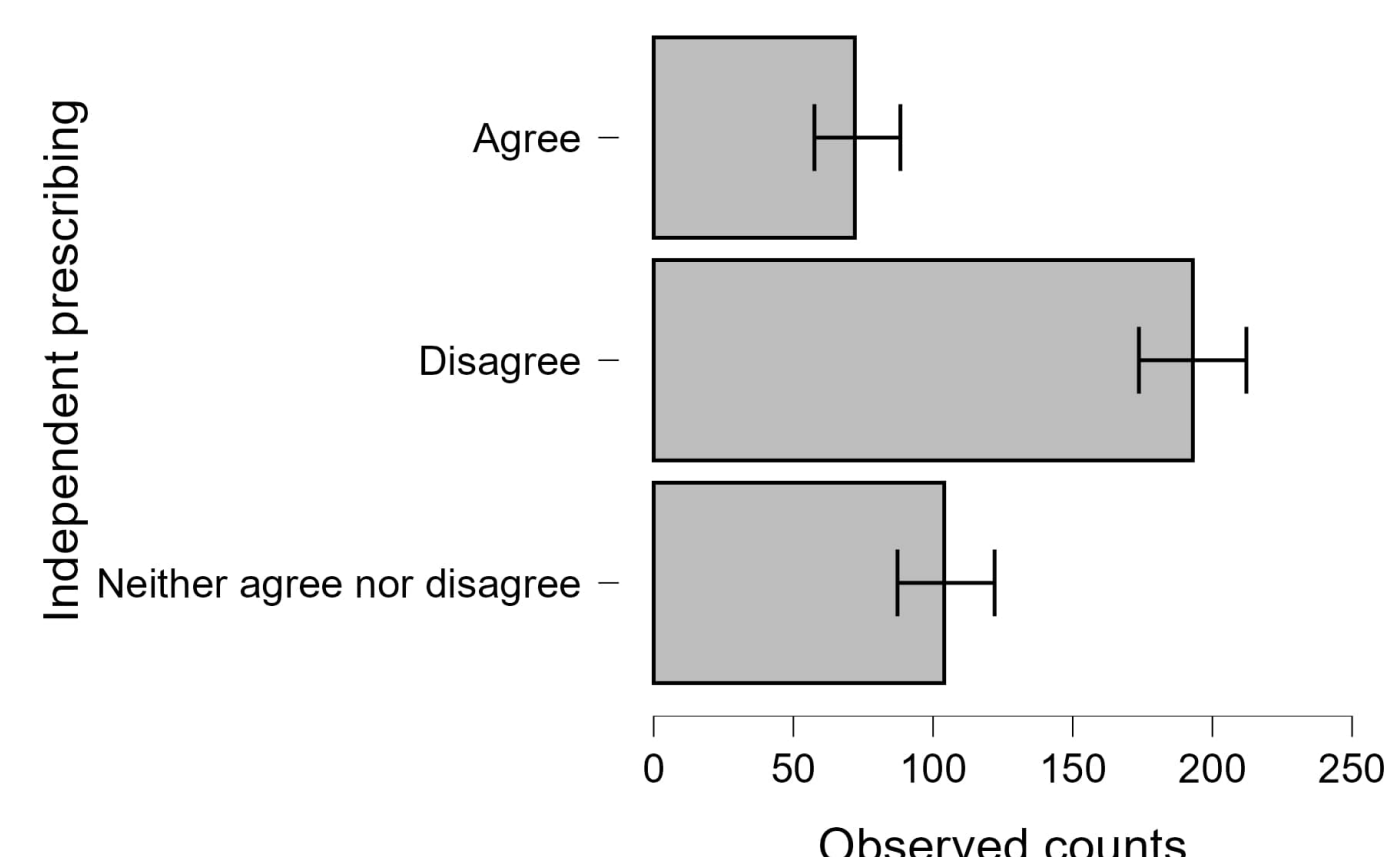
Physicians strongly support hospital pharmacists demonstrating medical device use, with 90.8% agreeing (n=335), 1.4% disagreeing (n=5), and 7.8% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (n=29).



Physicians exhibit moderate support for hospital pharmacists in managing minor ailments, with 59.1% in agreement (n=218), 24.4% in disagreement (n=90), and 16.5% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (n=61).



Physicians are divided on whether hospital pharmacists should interpret clinical biochemistry results, with 37.7% agreeing (n=139), 36.6% disagreeing (n=135), and 25.7% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (n=95).



Physicians demonstrate limited support for hospital pharmacists having independent prescribing authority, with only 19.5% in agreement (n=72), 52.3% in disagreement (n=193), and 28.2% neither agreeing nor disagreeing (n=104).

A total of 369 respondents participated in the survey, with 57.5% identifying as female (n=212), 34.1% as male (n=126), and 8.4% (n=31) choosing not to disclose their gender.

Physicians are comfortable with hospital pharmacists handling general tasks, like providing pharmaceutical information (94.9% agree), demonstrating medical device use (90.8% agree), managing minor ailments (59.1% agree).

However, they are less supportive of more advanced roles, with only 37.7% agreeing that hospital pharmacists could interpret clinical test results, 19.5% supporting independent prescribing.

Additionally, physicians appear to have limited awareness of full scope of roles that hospital pharmacists can undertake. While 65.3% are familiar with the roles of hospital pharmacists in Lithuania, only 34.1% are aware of their roles in international practice.

Conclusion and relevance

Physicians recognize hospital pharmacists' roles in providing medical information and monitoring medications but are less supportive of their advanced contributions.

To improve integration, targeted education is needed to raise awareness of hospital pharmacists' broader roles and their involvement in clinical decision-making within multidisciplinary healthcare teams.

Strengthening collaboration between doctors and pharmacists could enhance patient care outcomes and healthcare efficiency.

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Keywords:

Hospital pharmacist;
 Physicians;
 Multidisciplinary teams;
 Pharmacists integration;
 Pharmacist roles and perceptions;

