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Review

# Developing communication skills in pharmacy: A systematic review of the use of simulated patient methods

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## Abstract

### Objective

To review the literature relating to the use of simulated patient methods to enhance communication skills of pharmacists.

### Methodology

We searched Embase, Lilacs, Medline, Scielo, and Scopus databases between 1980 and 2008, using "communication skills", "patient counseling" and "pharmacist" as keywords. This search was then further refined by using "simulated patients", "pseudo-customer", "standardized patients", and "mystery shoppers" as additional keywords.

## Results

The initial search identified 241 published studies. Once further refined, 15 studies met inclusion criteria.

## Conclusion

The majority of studies had an assessment focus aimed at documenting counseling behavior of practicing pharmacists, rather than an educational focus aimed at equipping pharmacists with effective communication skills. In instances where simulated patient methods were used for educational purposes, little regard was given to the role of performance and corrective feedback in shaping communication behavior of pharmacists. The majority of studies failed to describe the competencies and skills being investigated in relation to communication in the practice of pharmacy.

## Practice implications

Simulated patient methods provide pharmacy educators with a tool for implementing communication skills in the practice of pharmacy and will serve as a basis for implementing communication skills development programs at the College of Pharmacy of the Federal University of Sergipe in Brazil.



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## Keywords

Pharmacistâ€“patient communication; Systematic review; Simulated patient; Communication skills; Counseling; Brazil

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