

# **Pharmacists' Role In Contraception Throughout The World: A Systematic Literature Review Study**

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## **Topic: *Pharmacy Practice/Clinical Practice***

### **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Contraception is an important aspect of reproductive health and rights and a key component of family planning. Despite the widespread availability of contraceptive methods, unintended pregnancies still occur globally, resulting in adverse health outcomes for women and children. Pharmacists play a crucial role in improving access to contraceptives. However, their involvement is highly influenced by the legal and regulatory frameworks in their countries. In many places, community pharmacists are the first and only point of contact for individuals seeking contraception. Therefore, it is critical to understand the role that pharmacists play in providing contraception and the barriers they face. The current knowledge gap on the legislation, regulations, policies, and guidelines governing the role of pharmacists in contraception across the globe necessitates this review.

**Objectives:** This review aims to examine the role of pharmacists in contraception throughout the world and to assess the legislative and regulatory frameworks that govern their role worldwide. It also examines the policies and guidelines that dictate pharmacists' practice and identifies the gaps and challenges associated with these frameworks.

**Methods:** A comprehensive literature search was conducted on Embase, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science databases from January 2000 to April 2023, using key search terms. Data were extracted and synthesized using a narrative approach. A review of each country's legislation, regulations, policies, and guidelines was also performed, including the pharmacists' role in prescribing contraceptives and in providing emergency contraceptives.

**Results:** The review identified several ways in which pharmacists improve contraceptive care and access to family planning. These include educating patients and providers on hormonal contraceptives, collaborating with providers to fight misinformation, and advocating for increased access to contraceptives. Pharmacists are usually involved in counseling and dispensing contraceptives. However, only a few countries, or states/regions within countries, allow pharmacists to prescribe them. Similar findings were obtained for the pharmacists' role in providing emergency contraceptives.

Conclusion: This review highlights the need for a coordinated approach to develop and implement legal and regulatory frameworks that support pharmacists' role in contraception provision in each country, across the globe. Real-life family planning training and practice can differ from the respective guidelines, regulations, and policies. Policymakers should prioritize increasing access to contraception through pharmacists and address the barriers associated with the frameworks. Future research studies should focus on identifying best practices for overcoming these challenges and improving contraceptive care worldwide.

**Keywords:** contraceptives, frameworks, legislations, pharmacists, policies