

# **The community pharmacist as a member of a primary health care team in South Africa - perceptions of pharmacists, doctors and nurses**

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The growing emphasis on primary health care (PHC) has drawn increased attention to disease prevention and health promotion activities from many health professionals, among them pharmacists. This paper explores the role of the community pharmacist as a member of the PHC team in South Africa, through the perceptions of pharmacists, nurses and doctors. Data were collected by survey and interviews. The results reveal a scenario where pharmacists are eager to engage in PHC activities, whereas nurses and doctors are more cautious in their support. Although they see pharmacists as health professionals, and are of the opinion that they should play a part in the PHC team, doctors and nurses strongly protect their own domains when it comes to allocation of potential tasks. This raises some difficulties with regard to the effective implementation of PHC. Based on the South African reality and a literature review, suggestions are made to develop models of PHC centres which would potentially overcome some of the problems raised.

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