

Student Pharmacist Collaboration with Loma Linda University Health Employee Health (LLUHEH) Tracking COVID-19 Exposures

Objective:

We aimed to describe the active role of student pharmacists in an emergency-formed “COVID-19 Call Center” supervised by LLUHEH director and pharmacy faculty to track and advise employees potentially exposed to COVID-19-positive patients or colleagues.

Methods:

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic led to suspension of many experiential rotations due to restrictions at clinical sites. During this time, a significant number of healthcare workers were exposed to confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients or colleagues in the front line. A group of fourth-year student pharmacists collaborated with LLUHEH to serve at a newly-formed COVID-19 Call Center located within the School of Pharmacy to track the exposed employees and direct them to the workers’ compensation hotline for further medical instructions based on CDC guidelines at the time.

Results:

The LLUHEH director and pharmacy faculty facilitated student development of risk assessment algorithms, tracking protocols, phone interview scripts, and notification letters. Students contacted potentially exposed employees via phone and email. Between March and May 2020, 63 confirmed COVID-19-positive patients were identified in our medical center and clinics, potentially exposing 1914 healthcare employees. During this period, 32 confirmed COVID-19-positive employees potentially exposed 578 colleagues, with significant increase from March to April. However, the rate of positive cases in employees remained steady from April to May.

Conclusions:

This experience demonstrates an innovative, interprofessional approach amidst the COVID-19 pandemic crisis which allows fourth-year pharmacy students to provide significant service as part of the COVID-19 Call Center team to track and direct exposed healthcare employees during their rotation.

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